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Author(s): Deborah Ainsworth

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A STUDY OF RESPONSES TO ADVERTISING
IMAGES DESIGNED TO ENCOURAGE LONE
PARENTS INTO WORK:

A QUALITATIVE STUDY AT CHESTER BUSINESS
SCHOOL

DEBORAH AINSWORTH

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the University of
Chester for the degree of Master of Business Administration

CHESTER BUSINESS SCHOOL

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Abstract

This study looks at lone parents' responses to 5 discrete advertising images, aimed at encouraging them into employment, which have been utilised by the Government Agency Jobcentre Plus. It examines lone parents' reactions to the imagery by utilising a questionnaire linked to each image and focus groups to achieve open discussion. The aim of this methodology is to identify which image is most likely to make the lone parents' take action to find employment.

The study concludes that lone parents can be influenced by astute targeting of advertising images. However, it also suggests that lone parents' are not an amorphous mass and it would be wise to utilise a range of images that would appeal to the broad spectrum of lone parents linking this to their age and the social area where they reside.

Furthermore, it finds key themes that on a generic level are more than likely to appeal to lone parents. These include images of 'real people' to which they can relate and to specifically link imagery to their age group and the social area where they reside, identifying clear links within the imagery to employment.

Declaration

This work is original and has not been submitted previously for any academic purpose. All secondary sources are acknowledged.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Table of contents

Declaration4

Table of contents5

List of figures7

1 Introduction9

1.1 Background to the research9

1.2 Research question.....10

1.3 Justification for the research12

1.4 Methodology13

1.5 Definitions.....14

1.6 Outline of the chapters16

1.7 Summary17

2 Literature review18

2.1 Introduction18

2.2 Parent disciplines/fields.....18

2.3 Main theme, analytical models and applicability to research questions19

2.3.1 Concept of Public Sector Marketing19

2.3.2 How Consumers respond to marketing imagery21

2.3.3 Theories for Marketing Imagery27

2.3.4 Semiotics28

2.4 Conceptual model.....30

2.4.2 Reference\Authors linked to the numbered reference on each element of the conceptual model.....33

2.5 Summary33

3 Methodology34

3.1 Introduction34

3.2 Methodological considerations35

3.2.1 Justification for the selected paradigm and methodology35

3.2.2 Rejected methods36

3.3 Research design.....38

3.3.1 Images utilised for the Research38

3.3.2 Identifying lone parents to participate in the research38

3.3.3 Focus Groups.....39

3.3.4 Questionnaire41

3.4	Research procedures.....	42
3.4.1	Reliability or Dependability	42
3.4.2	Triangulation	43
3.4.3	Transferability	43
3.4.4	Validity.....	43
3.5	Ethical considerations	43
3.6	Summary	45
4	Findings.....	46
4.1	Introduction	46
4.2	Application of methodology.....	46
4.3	Analysis of Participants and none participants in the research	47
4.4	Questionnaire Findings	50
4.4	Focus Group Feedback.....	58
4.5	Summary	63
5	Conclusions and implications	64
5.1	Introduction	64
5.2	Critical evaluation of adopted methodology	64
5.3	Conclusions about each research objective (aim)	67
5.4	To understand the theoretical underpinning of advertising images	67
5.5	To investigate unemployed lone parents responses to advertising images currently in use by the Government Agency Jobcentre Plus	67
5.6	Compare and contrast the findings of aims 1 and 2	69
5.7	To draw conclusion for consideration based on the findings made within aim 3	73
5.8	Conclusions about the research question	74
5.9	Limitations of the study.....	75
5.10	Opportunities for further research	76
	Bibliography (APA)	77
6	Appendices – Appendix 1 – Image 1 to Image 5	86
7	Appendix 2 - Questionnaire	91

List of figures

1.3.1.1 Figure 1 – Distribution of Child Poverty by Family Type (adapted from Gregg, Harkness & Machin, 1999). 12

2.3.2.1 Figure 2 – The Zone of Tolerance (adapted from Galloway, 1999). 23

2.3.2.2 Figure 3 Movement of the Zone of Tolerance (adapted from Galloway, 1999). 23

2.3.2.3 Figure 4 – A Communications Model (adapted from Mower & Minor, 2001). 24

2.3.2.4 Figure 5 – Communications objectives (adapted from Rowley, 1998). 26

2.3.3.1 Figure 6 – Facets of an image (the 4 Cs) (adapted from Branthwaite, 2002). 28

2.3.4.1 Figure 7 – Signifier & Signified (adapted from Lacey, 1998). 29

2.4.1.1 Figure 8 – Conceptual Model..... 32

4.3.1.1 Figure 9 – Equal Opportunity Monitoring of Lone Parents who attended the focus groups 49

4.3.1.2 Figure 10 – This chart demonstrates the findings from the respondents’ questionnaires, which related to which image ‘attracted attention’ this concept links to the AIDA acronym founded by Strong (1925)..... 51

4.3.1.3 Figure 11 - This chart demonstrates the findings from the lone parents’ questionnaires, which relate to which image that they found ‘Interesting’, this concept links directly to ‘interest’ within the AIDA acronym founded by Strong (1925). 52

4.3.1.4 Figure 12 – This chart demonstrates the findings from the lone parents’ questionnaires, which relate to which image they thought would make them want to find a job, this concept is linked to ‘desire’ within the AIDA acronym founded by Strong (1925)..... 53

4.3.1.5 Figure 13 – This chart demonstrates the findings from the lone parents’ questionnaires, which relate to the image that lone parents thought encouraged them to find a job, this concept links directly to the receivers decodes concept as defined by (Mower & Minor, 2001; Proctor 2007; Evans, Moutinho & Van Raaij, 1997; Hoyer & MacInnis, 2007; Lacey, 1998). 54

4.3.1.6 Figure 14 – This chart demonstrates the findings from the lone parents’ questionnaires, on which image has helped them to find a job this concept links directly to the receivers decodes concept as defined by (Mower & Minor, 2001;

Proctor 2007; Evans, Moutinho & Van Raaij, 1997; Hoyer & MacInnis, 2007; Lacey, 1998).....	55
4.3.1.7 Figure 15 - This chart demonstrates the findings from the lone parents' questionnaires, on whether they recognised who had produced the image this concept links directly to 'facets of an image' as defined by Branthwaite (2002)...	56
4.3.1.8 Figure 16 – This chart demonstrates the lone parents' feelings to the image that would put them off applying for a job this concept links directly to 'facets of an image' as defined by Branthwaite (2002).	57
4.4.1.1 Figure 17 - This chart demonstrates what the lone parents' think about each image this concept links directly to 'Weltanschauung or Worldview' as defined by Checkland (2001).	59
4.4.1.2 Figure 18 – This chart demonstrates what Jobcentre Plus means to each of the lone parent respondents, this question links to the 'zone of tolerance' theory (Galloway, 1999; Mower & Minor, 2001; Liljander & Strandvik, 1993).	61
4.4.1.3 Figure 19 – This chart relates to whether lone parents have had any negative experiences of Jobcentre Pus and linked to figure 18 would this deter them from using Jobcentre Plus for Job search, this concept links to the 'zone of tolerance' theory (Galloway, 1999; Mower & Minor, 2001; Liljander & Strandvik, 1993). ..	62

1 Introduction

1.1 Background to the research

According to Brewer & Gregg (2001) over the past 20 years, the incidence of relative poverty among Britain's children has tripled. UNICEF (2007); Harker (2006) and Freud (2007) claim that these changes are related to the increased earnings inequality, growth in the number of single (lone) parent households and an increased share of households with children with no working adult.

To this end, the Labour Government's 1997 manifesto pledge was to adopt an economic policy which aims to eradicate child poverty by 2020. Blair (2002) claims that these policies embody the biggest change in the welfare and employment system in 60 years. These changes saw the launch of Jobcentre Plus which is an executive agency of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). Launched in 2002, it brought together the Employment Service and parts of the Benefits Agency that delivered services to working age people (Jobcentre Plus, 2008).

Jobcentre Plus contributes to the Government's aim of tackling poverty, reducing worklessness, promoting growth and opportunity, and modernising Government (Jobcentre Plus, 2008). Blair (2002) claims that Jobcentre Plus embodies on the one hand the enabling welfare state, spreading opportunity and on the other reform of public services, as a new responsive service focused on the jobless. Brewer & Gregg (2001) support this reform affirming that increased direct financial support to families with children, creating financial incentives for work for parents, adopting more intensive case management for the welfare caseload and ameliorating the long-term consequences of the deprivation poverty brings, has directly reduced child poverty.

The Secretary of State (2007) claims that work is the best route out of poverty for most parents and their children. This is not only because children in families where parents are in work are much less likely to be poor in income terms, although this is of course

the case. It is also because it is paid employment that offers the most sustainable route out of poverty for the longer term; because work is good for the physical and psychological health of parents and hence of their children, this view is supported by Harker (2006) and the Welfare Reform Green Paper (2007). These findings are not new; in fact many academics have supported this argument over the last century. All have suggested that social deprivation and its effects on children is largely a problem of families on marginal or inadequate incomes (Holman, Lafitte, Spencer & Wilson, 1971; Rowntree, 1901; British Broadcasting Corporation [BBC], 2007; Child Poverty Action Group, 2007).

So getting more parents into work is central to reducing child poverty over the longer term. However, the Social Security Act (2004) does not appear to support the Government's commitment on placing lone parents into sustained employment, as it affirms that lone parents have a statutory requirement to attend a work focused interview with DWP and they do not have a statutory obligation to actively seek employment to be eligible and receive income support. So what techniques can Jobcentre Plus utilise to engage with lone parent customer groups.

1.2 Research question

Some academics claim that Central Government now makes extensive use of promotional techniques in engaging with customer groups (Walsh, 1994; Bean & Hussey, 1997). Walsh (1994) goes further suggesting that politics itself has become a focus of marketing, with sophisticated use of opinion analysis and image creation. With Government Agencies developing brands to promote services and to preserve self interest via the 'brand' consumers. According to Belch & Belch (2007) the creative strategy used to sell these products is based on the development of a strong, memorable identity for the brand through image advertising.

Jobcentre Plus has been utilising private sector marketing techniques since 1997 to engage and encourage unemployed lone parents back into paid employment. Proctor (2007) supports this activity stating that marketing skills developed in the private sector can be employed in the public sector to promote and deliver non-profit motivated

services. According to Goldman (1992) advertising imagery draws on our most cherished relations and desires. Gregory (1966) (is cited within Lacey, 1998) as stating that of our five senses it is sight that gives us the most detailed information. According to Lacey (1998) images are created in order to communicate a message. Richin (1991) and Cotese (2004) affirm that advertising represents an unrealistic or idealised picture of people and their lives.

The marketing attempts to lure unemployed lone parents into employment may or may not have an impact. Attempts to find an answer as to the effectiveness or otherwise of the campaigns produced very little in the way of research. However, Jobcentre Plus have conducted a wide range of marketing activities to unemployed lone parents on a national, regional and district level all encompassing a 1% to 3% response rate to the direct mail activities (The Institute of Direct Marketing, 2004 state that 4% is the response rate expected to a direct mail campaign). Having worked with unemployed lone parents for many years and being tasked to market and engage with unemployed lone parents through external communications led to the research question.

This research aims to look at how unemployed lone parents respond to a series of advertising images aimed at getting them into employment.

A study of responses to advertising images designed to encourage lone parents into work:

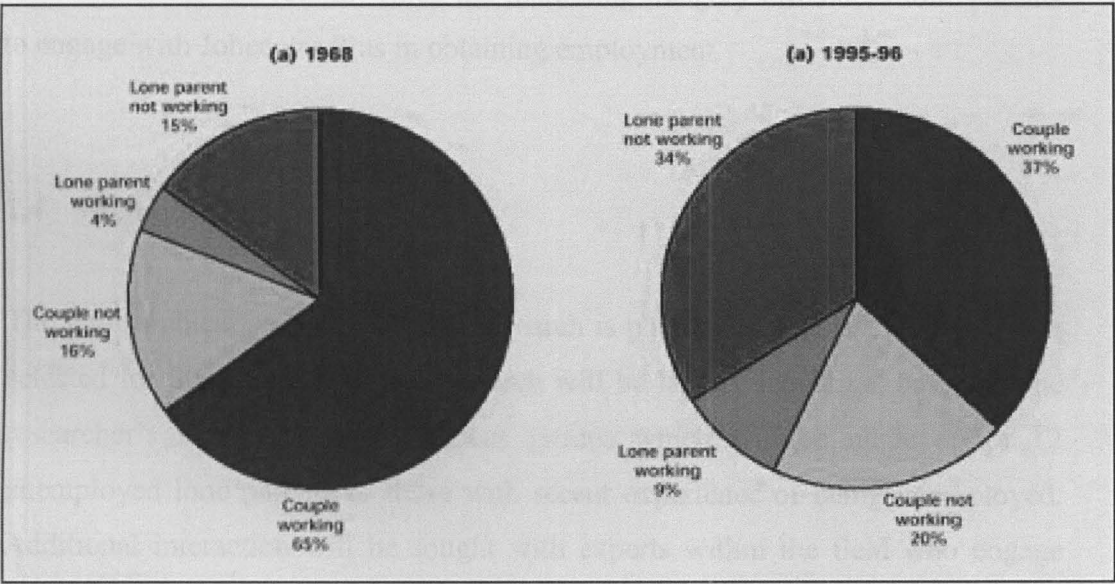
1. To understand the theoretical underpinning of advertising images;
2. To investigate unemployed lone parents responses to advertising images currently in use by the Government Agency Jobcentre Plus;
3. Compare and contrast the findings of aims 1 and 2; and
4. To draw conclusion for consideration based on the findings made within aim 3.

1.3 Justification for the research

The National Children’s Bureau (2007) state that there are two definitions of poverty including relative and absolute. The relative definition is the most widely used in the UK this measure takes account of improving living standards. Gregg, Harkness & Machin (1999), claim that the rise in child poverty is closely linked to a growth in the number of children living in families without work. Between 1968 and 1995/96, the proportion of all children with no working parent rose from 2 to 10% of those in two-parent families, and from 30 to 58% of children of lone parents. Gregg, Harkness & Machin (1999) claim that one-fifth of the overall increase in child poverty can be attributed specifically to the rise in the proportion of children with lone parents, from 6% to 22% of all children (see figure 1).

1.3.1.1 Figure 1 – Distribution of Child Poverty by Family Type (adapted from Gregg, Harkness & Machin, 1999).

Figure 1: Distribution of child poverty, by family type



The Welfare Reform Green Paper (2007) states that there are some 1.8 million lone parents of working age in Great Britain, of whom fewer than 170,000 are lone fathers. Of the total, 787,000 lone parents are on Income Support. The lone parent employment rate has seen significant improvement since 1997 and is at a record level of 56.6%.

However, the number of lone parents out of work and claiming Income Support remains high (Welfare Reform Green Paper, 2007).

Although there is consistent marketing of job opportunities, government schemes, advice and support services to help the unemployed, Walsh (1994) claims that it is fragmented, piecemeal and insular, akin to much public sector marketing. Aside from product-driven national campaigns, for example; 'New Deal for Lone Parents', there is little evidence of innovative direct marketing to the target group neither of the unemployed, nor of any explicit efforts to bring them up to date with the regeneration boom and the plethora of available jobs throughout the United Kingdom (UK).

According to Renckstorf, McQuail & Jankowski (1996), the notion 'active audience' is one of the central and comparably stable elements of communication theory and research. Nevertheless, there are good reasons to be critical of the way in which this notion has been conceptualised as Katz & Lazarsfeld (2005) first identified in 1955 the role of personal influences in mass communication and the 'part played by people' in the processes of mass communications. This research aims to identify the role in which the marketing imagery influences lone parents to engage with Jobcentre Plus in obtaining employment.

1.4 Methodology

The philosophical approach for this research is phenomenological. This has been selected for this research, as the research will be largely inductive, based on the researcher's interaction with 3 focus groups which will be made up of 12 unemployed lone parents or those with recent experience of being unemployed. Additional interaction will be sought with experts within the field who engage with lone parents, these include; Jobcentre Plus. In addition, the study is based on 5 discrete images utilised by Jobcentre Plus to encourage lone parents into employment.

This research will be based on a combined approach consisting of 3 focus groups (which will have a minimum total of 12 lone parents in total). Bloor, Frankland, Thomas & Robson (2002) affirms that focus groups provide an ostensibly attractive medium for public participation in the research process: they are social events, they are time-limited; and they require no technical skills of the group members. Bloor et al (2002) continue that focus groups have a much larger part to play as an ancillary method, alongside and complementing other methods. Therefore the use of a questionnaire should complement the focus group (a questionnaire on each image will be completed by every lone parent who attends the focus group). To support the research strategy a detailed review of academic literature will be conducted. The collation of this secondary research to be utilised will aid the researchers understanding of marketing imagery.

1.5 Definitions

Child Poverty

Child Poverty is defined as those children who are living in a household with below 60% median income before housing costs (Harker, 2006; UNICEF, 2007 & Welfare Reform Green Paper, 2007). However DWP (2003) state that child poverty will be measured by 3 indicators absolute low income, relative low income and material deprivation and low income combined.

Income Support

Income Support provides financial help for people between 16 and 60 who are on a low income, who are not in full-time paid work and who are in one of the groups of people who can claim Income Support e.g. lone parent, sick or disabled, unable to work because you are caring for someone or if you are registered blind (Jobcentre Plus, 2008).

Jobcentre Plus

Jobcentre Plus is an executive agency of the Department for Work and Pensions. Launched in 2002, it brought together the Employment Service and parts of the Benefits Agency that delivered services to working age people. Jobcentre Plus administer Government benefits to working age customers and support unemployed customers in obtaining employment Jobcentre Plus (n.d.).

Lone Parents

A lone parent (also single parent and sole parent) is a parent who cares for children without the assistance of another parent in the home, Welfare Reform Green Paper (2007).

Marketing

There are many definitions of marketing however for this research the definition utilised is, marketing is the process of interesting potential customers and clients in your products and/or services (Blythe, 2007; Cohn, 2003).

Poverty

Poverty is defined as living in a household with below 60 per cent median income before housing costs (Harker, 2006; UNICEF, 2007 and Welfare Reform Green Paper (2007).

Relative Poverty

Relative Poverty is the most widely used definition of poverty in the UK this measure takes account of improving living standards the National Children's Bureau (2007).

Weltanschauung or Worldview

Weltanschauung or Worldview is described as what is going on in the wider world that is influencing and shaping the "situation" Checkland (2001).

1.6 Outline of the chapters

Chapter 1: Chapter 1 introduces the research question and problem.

The problem is that marketing to the out of work appears to be a haphazard, underdeveloped sphere of marketing that perhaps could be done better.

The research question involves analysing findings from questionnaires and focus groups to measure responses to advertising images.

Chapter 2: Chapter 2 looks at the literature on the subject. This chapter mixes the literature on marketing and advertising measurement models with studies on unemployed lone parent and the nature of unemployment.

Chapter 3: Chapter 3 outlines and describes the methodology and justifies the choices used in the course of the research. This chapter set out the details of the range of activities undertaken, including the focus groups, questionnaires, images chosen. It explains the information required to enable the study to be replicated by another researcher.

Chapter 4: Chapter 4 lays out the data collected in an easy to understand format utilising bar charts and data display tables. It presents initial findings that reveal how the lone parents' have responded to the images. It explores the correlation between the themes used and in particular the relationship between the measurement themes of 'Worldview', 'attention', 'interest', 'action' and 'desire' set against the other measurement themes: 'semiotics', 'facets of an image', 'receivers decoders', 'zones of tolerance', 'content', 'meanings' and 'emotion' and how much the group 'liked' the images.

Chapter 5: Chapter 5 begins to unpick this first raft of findings, compares the research with key academic works on advertising measurement and delves into the areas of gender to mark any critical differences or patterns of response. In addition, this chapter concludes that there are indeed lessons to be learned from the research, with indications that images are important in this area of marketing and greater attention should be paid to the implications of this study.

Chapter 5 also warns of the relatively small scale of this research and urges caution around these early findings.

1.7 Summary

Chapter 1 introduces the research problem and research question. It justifies the research, with definitions presented, briefly describes and justifies the methodology and provides the outline and limitations of the study. Chapter 1 provides the foundation upon which the dissertation can proceed with the details of the research.

2 Literature review

2.1 Introduction

The research conducted for this study, will be grounded in literature which will include journal searches from *European Journal of Marketing*; *Journal of Consumer Research Inc* and *Qualitative Market Research* the literature will be utilised to examine Consumers responses to advertising imagery. Key texts will include Bean, J. & Hussey, L. (1997); Belch, G. E. & Belch, M. A. (2007); Blythe, J. (2005); Cortese, A, J. (2004). The literature review will also detail government policy which has brought about this research question.

2.2 Parent disciplines/fields

Despite the UK being a wealthy nation, with a strong economy and the highest employment rate amongst the G8, the UK has comparatively high levels of child poverty. Around one in five children are living in relative poverty among the 25 European Union countries only Italy, Portugal and the Slovak Republic have higher levels of child poverty (Harker, 2006, UNICEF, 2007). During the 1980's the gap between rich and poor grew faster in the UK than almost any other industrialised country, this is still reflected in society today (Welfare Reform Green Paper, 2006).

According to Gregg & Harkness (2003) over the last thirty years the employment of married/co-habiting mothers in the UK rose dramatically, especially for those with young children. Yet the employment rate of lone mothers was lower in the early 1990s than it was in the late 1970s, at just under 40%; and 25 percentage point lower than the employment rates of married mothers (Gregg & Harkness, 2003; Welfare Reform Green Paper, 2007). In 1997 the incoming Labour Government initiated a series of policy reforms aimed at reducing child poverty. A key element of their strategy was a move towards increasing employment rates among families with children. The Secretary of State (2007) affirms that getting more parents into work is central to reducing child poverty over the longer term. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2008) supports this argument stating that children who grow up in workless households are themselves much more likely to be poor in adulthood.

Finlayson & Marsh (2007) conducted a sample survey of lone parents which resulted in 14% of all the out of work lone parents surveyed stating that they were actively seeking work at the time of the interview. A further 8% said that they had looked for work during the past 12 months but had paused in their job search. So if Jobcentre Plus was able to develop effective marketing to attract the interest of this audience they may aid lone parents in their quest to obtain employment. Walsh (1994) supports this view stating that it is perfectly possible to argue that people want something, and that it might produce some beneficial results. Walsh (1994) continues by stating that the role of voluntarism and altruism is important to some goods, and more generally to social efficiency. If the commonly held paradigm that 'work is good for you' is reinforced by the multiple marketing attempts by government departments to engage with lone parents, by marketing round about them, never directly to them. Public sector marketing assumptions are accepted and implemented readily, adopting an 'if you build it they will come' stance. The compulsory nature of some of the employment schemes (New Deal) validates this notion. However, despite and in some cases because of, compulsion and heavy sanctions for non-compliance, certain sections of the unemployed including lone parents continue to stay away (Edin & Lein, 1997; Walsh, 1994).

2.3 Main theme, analytical models and applicability to research questions

2.3.1 Concept of Public Sector Marketing

Lone parents who claim benefits are a key customer group of Jobcentre Plus. The Government has set a target to raise the proportion of lone parents in work to 70% by 2010. According to the Secretary of State (2007) lone parents like other customer groups are a disparate group, even within this target group there is a considerable diversity of circumstances. Horton & Farnham (1999) stated that during the 1980s public service organisations were encouraged to recognise service users as customers, understand their needs and preferences and develop services in ways that would maximise customer satisfaction. To that end, the appeal of marketing is clear. If marketing allows private sector manufacturers to achieve commercial objectives through understanding customer needs and satisfying them, then surely these disciplines will work for public services, to enable them to achieve their target driven business objectives.

According to Groucutt (2005) the key to successful marketing is in defining the needs (rather than the wants) of the customer as precisely as possible, which then in turn means to identify groups of customers with the same needs. Cohn (2003) takes this definition further in stating that the classification of marketing is to give the customer what they want and that marketing is an invisible hand, which moves products or services from a seller to a buyer. However Walsh (1994) and Bean & Hussey (1997) claim that this is not the case with the public sector as often the user of the service is not responsible for any part of the exchange process.

Walsh (1994) suggests that the way forward for the public sector is to recognise that the users of the public services are customers, with rights, and should be treated as such. Buurma (2001) argues that this is not always the case and that public organisations may primarily use marketing for promoting their self interest.

Various academics claim that the public sector marketing exchange is 'societal marketing' (Kotler, 1999; Crane & Desmond, 2002; Bean & Hussey, 1997). Societal marketing emulates that marketers should take some responsibility for the needs of society at large (Kotler, 1999; Crane & Desmond, 2002; Bean & Hussey, 1997; Blythe, 2005). According to Blythe (2005) this orientation moves the focus away from the immediate exchanges between an organisation and its customers and even away from the relationship between the organisation and its consumers, and towards the long-term effects on society at large. Kotler (1999) concludes that this marketing concept holds that the organisation's task is to determine the needs, wants, and interests of its target markets and to deliver the desired satisfactions more effectively and efficiently than competitors, in a way that preserves or enhances the consumer's and the society's well-being. This puts even more emphasis on identifying the needs of the consumers, and on providing a service or product which is of the required quality. It also brings the well-being of society into the equation, and leaves out the profit motive (Bean & Hussey, 1997; Crane & Desmond, 2002). However O'Shaughnessy (1996) claims that social marketing is more civil and civic, with slick production financed by elite groups such as the Government itself. Crane & Desmond (2002) conclude that the use of the societal marketing concept is problematic with respect to a number of critical moral issues. In particular, they question who should and can decide what is in the public's best

interests, and elucidate the moral deficiencies of the rational-instrumental process upon which marketing decisions are rationalised.

2.3.2 How Consumers respond to marketing imagery

Richin (1991) and Cotese (2004) claim that advertising represents an unrealistic or idealised picture of people and their lives. This proposition defines a clear link to the suggestion that effective marketing defines consumer needs. This view is supported by Belch & Belch (2007) who state that the Psychological Model is a driver which can compel consumers towards their choice. Blythe (2005) explains that drive leads onto motivation, which is the reason why many people take action, the level of action will depend on the desirability of the end goal and the ease of achieving it.

The Psychological Model is often likened to Maslow's Hierarchy Needs Theory. This theory suggests that an individual is ready to act upon the growth needs, if and only if, the deficiency needs are met. Maslow's initial conceptualisation included only one growth need, self actualisation, Maslow & Lowery (1998). Although Maslow's hierarchy brings useful organisation to the complex issue of needs Hoyer and MacInnis (2007) argue that it is too simplistic. Firstly, needs are not always ordered exactly as in this hierarchy, for example some lone parents may put higher priority on an evening out with friends than the necessity of caring for their child. Secondly, the hierarchy ignores the intensity of needs and the resulting effects on motivation. Finally, the ordering of needs may not be consistent across cultures, for example, with some cultures, social needs and belonging may be higher in the hierarchy than egoistic needs.

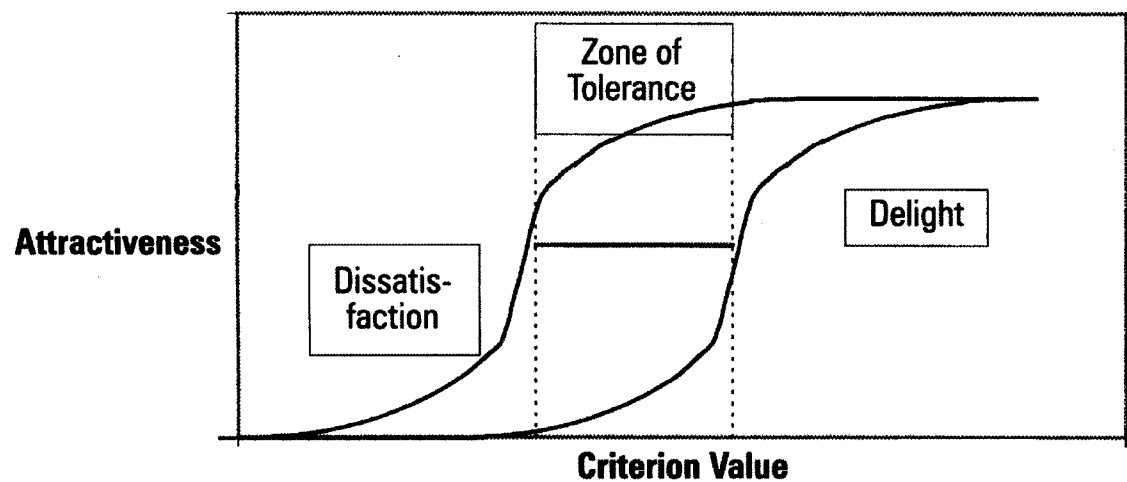
A number of academic models on consumer behaviour, or the influences on consumer behaviour, imply non-linearity and non-reversibility (Galloway, 1999; Del-Barrio-Garcia & Luque-Martinez, 2003; Belch & Belch, 2007; Branthwaite, 2002). These include the order winning/qualifying criteria developed by Hill in 1985 and satisfiers/dissatisfiers and zone of tolerance models from the field of service developed by Kennedy & Thirkill in the 1980's. Galloway (1999) affirms that an important characteristic of these models is that the influence of the variables in question is, either explicitly or implicitly asymmetrical; and some models identify variables which will influence consumer behaviour in only one direction.

The order winning model ascertains that the value attached by customers to certain characteristics of a service or product will be a function of the relative magnitude of that characteristic, for example, this could be linked to the attractiveness or reliability of a product (Galloway, 1999). Similarly, the central outline of the causal model is made up of relationships established between the cognitive responses/attitudes and purchase intentions (Del Barrio-Garcia & Luque-Martinez, 2003).

The qualifying criteria is defined as characteristics which a service or product must possess at a minimum; an example of this for a service could be the possession of ISO9000. This view is supported by Galloway (1999), who affirms that achievement of a better performance will render the product or service more attractive, while poorer performance reduces attractiveness (Government organisations are exposed in this debate due to the focus on Governmental spend on services and the effects of positive or adverse media coverage). Leading on from these satisfiers for service, quality for the public sector could be described as the Jobseekers Charter. Galloway (1999) argues that it is widely accepted that service quality is an important element in gaining and maintaining competitive advantage with consumers. Walsh (1994) affirms that marketing for the public service will need to develop a psychology of citizenship to match the psychology of the consumer.

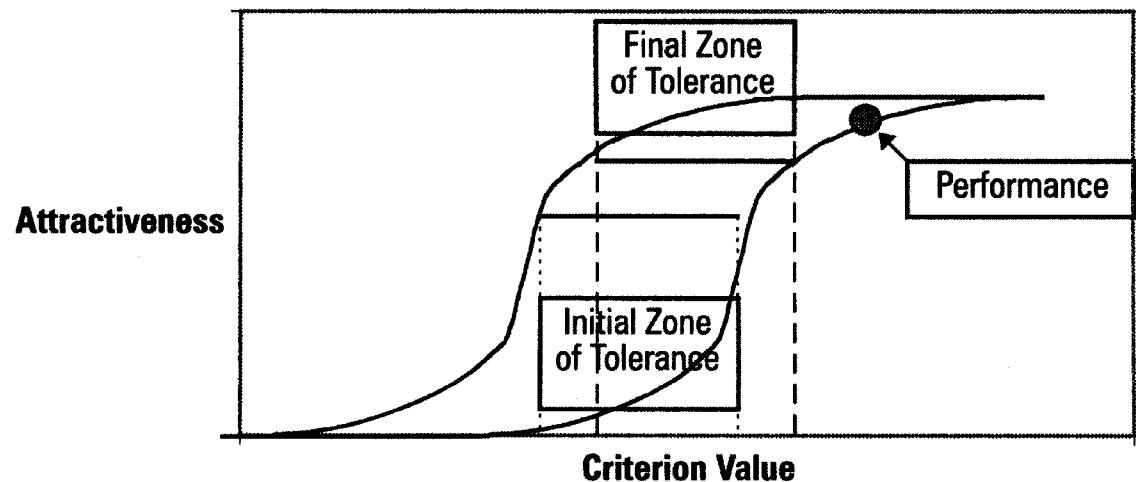
A zone of tolerance concept has been studied by a number of academics, for example, Galloway (1999) suggests that consumers identify a zone of tolerance in terms of actual service performance. Other academics support this with Mower & Minor (2001) identifying perception as the process through which individuals are exposed to information. Liljander & Strandvik (1993) interpret the zone of tolerance as a form of inertia and go on to claim that the disconfirmation paradigm that the consumer will feel unsatisfied if performance is below expectations and satisfied when expectations are confirmed or exceeded. In relating the perceptions\zone of tolerance to Jobcentre Plus, if a lone parent has experienced a delay in their claim to government benefits, and then Jobcentre Plus markets the job search services to them, the customer's zone of tolerance/perception of the service may be negative (due to the earlier interaction with the organisation).

2.3.2.1 Figure 2 – The Zone of Tolerance (adapted from Galloway, 1999).



Galloway (1999) states that implicit in this is the idea that the sensitivity of perceived service quality to variations in the service will depend upon the zone of tolerance. If this is wide it is quite difficult to produce either a noticeable good or noticeably bad perception. The general argument is that the achievement of some standard or improvement in an element will generate satisfaction, but its absence, or reduction, will not generate dissatisfaction. Conversely, the failure to achieve a standard in another element may generate dissatisfaction in a customer (this could apply to the aforementioned Jobcentre Plus example regarding benefits and the marketing of job search programmes).

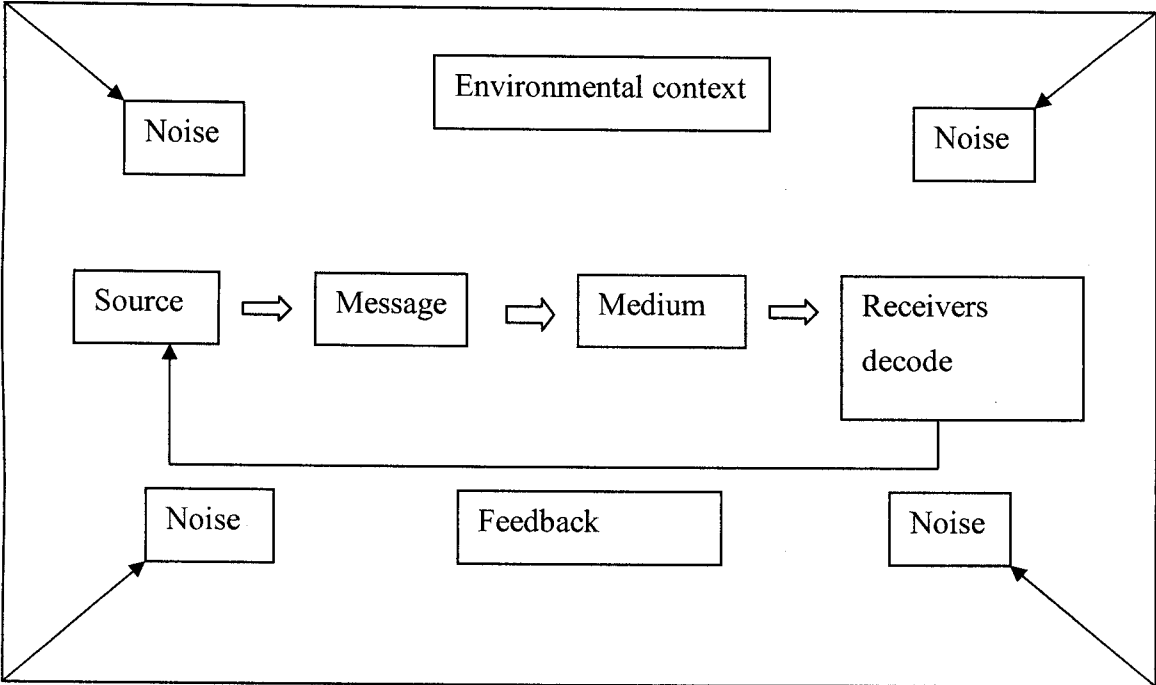
2.3.2.2 Figure 3 Movement of the Zone of Tolerance (adapted from Galloway, 1999)



Various academics suggest that a process of communication and dialogue model should be utilised in reaching and communicating with an audience, some go as far as stating that these models can be used to help explain customer buying behaviours (Mower & Minor, 2001; Proctor 2007; Evans, Moutinho & Van Raaij, 1997 and Hoyer & MacInnis 2007).

According to Mower & Minor (2001) researchers have developed a communications model that depicts the relationships among various factors that influence the effectiveness and impact of persuasive communications (figure 4 presents a version of this model). As shown in figure 4, persuasive communications begin with a source of information which according to Mower & Minor (2001) is encoded and delivered. The message can be coded in many ways such as advertising job search facilities i.e. advisory services, this is a common medium utilised to engage with lone parents. Within the communications model the message is delivered via an identified medium or channel this could be direct mail or radio advertising. Various academics including Mower & Minor (2001) and Proctor (2007) suggest that the characteristics of the channel influence the interpretation of the message, as well as how the information is processed. Or another descriptor being the message is received by members of the audience who decode and interpret the communications, for example, Jobcentre Plus marketing the message to lone parents which encourages them to find a job.

2.3.2.3 Figure 4 – A Communications Model (adapted from Mower & Minor, 2001).



According to Mower & Minor (2001) various characteristics of the aforementioned audience can moderate the effects of the persuasive communications and how they interpret the message. This view is shared by Lacey (1998) although this view is only pertinent to marketing imagery suggesting that theoretically, at the level of denotation almost everyone will describe an image in exactly the same way; that this is not the case suggests that even denotation is affected by an individual's understanding of the world. This concept is supported by Checkland (2001) soft system methodology in which the mnemonic CATWOE is utilised to describe the human activity and situation. The 'W' within the mnemonic is defined as *weltanschauung* or Worldview this is described as what is going on in the wider world that is influencing and shaping the "situation" and need for the system to adapt.

It is clear that lone parents are not an amorphous mass, but a group with differing interests, needs, abilities and skills and it will require a range of approaches to get a message across about returning to employment. According to Evans, Harkness & Ortiz (2004) many lone parents cycle in and out of paid work. While the rate at which lone parents enter employment has converged with that of other groups in the labour force, the rate at which they leave employment, although falling in recent years, remains high by comparison with other parents and single people. Lone parents are twice as likely as others to leave employment (Welfare Reform Green Paper, 2007; Evans et al, 2004). Jobcentre Plus, are in the fortunate position of engaging with lone parents throughout the transactions of leaving benefit to start employment and then indeed the engagement when they want to reclaim benefits. Considering these engagements with this group and the mandatory requirement for a work focused interview, advisers are in the position to build relationships with them, enabling them to distinguish preferences, develop profiles of the market segments which reflect combinations of these attributes (Proctor, 2001; Blythe, 2005).

Much research conducted into lone parent customers and the effects of child poverty generally describe them as those with or/and living alongside: low skills levels, poor housing, benefit dependant, high levels of crimes or the victims of, poor health and education (Leitch, 2006; Freud, 2007; Harker, 2007; Welfare Reform Green Paper, 2007). According to Kucewicz & McGinley (2007) insight research methodology was conducted with a sample of Jobcentre Plus lone parent advisers the main theme to materialise from this interaction being "we care about children and we want them to

have a better future”. This descriptor may help with the segmentation and targeting of the lone parents customer group, this view is supported by Rowley (1998) who states the first stage in communication is to characterise the target audience.

Many academics have taken the communication strategy further in terms of linking the objectives to that of promotion. The way in which these objectives can be categorised depends on the model of the communication or promotional process. Figure 5 compares four different models of this communication process, and each has three different stages (Rowley, 1998; Blythe, 2005). Each can be identified as having three different stages:

1. The cognitive stage – during this stage the potential customer becomes aware of the product\service.
2. The affective stage – during which customers form opinions and attributes concerning the service or product.
3. The behaviour stage – during which customers take action (such as making a purchase) on the basis of their experiences in the first two stages.

2.3.2.4 Figure 5 – Communications objectives (adapted from Rowley, 1998).

Figure 1 Communications objectives

Stages	"AIDA" Model (a)	"Hierarchy-of-Effects" Model (b)	"Innovation-Adoption" Model (c)	"Communications" Model (d)
Cognitive stage	Attention ↓	Awareness ↓ Knowledge	Awareness ↓	Exposure ↓ Reception ↓ Cognitive response
Affective Stage	Interest ↓ Desire	Liking ↓ Preference ↓ Conviction	Interest ↓ Evaluation	Attitude ↓ Intention
Behaviour Stage	↓ Action	↓ Purchase	Trial ↓ Adoption	↓ Behaviour

Sources: (a) Strong (1925) (b) Lavidge and Steiner (1961) (c) Rogers (1962) (d) various sources

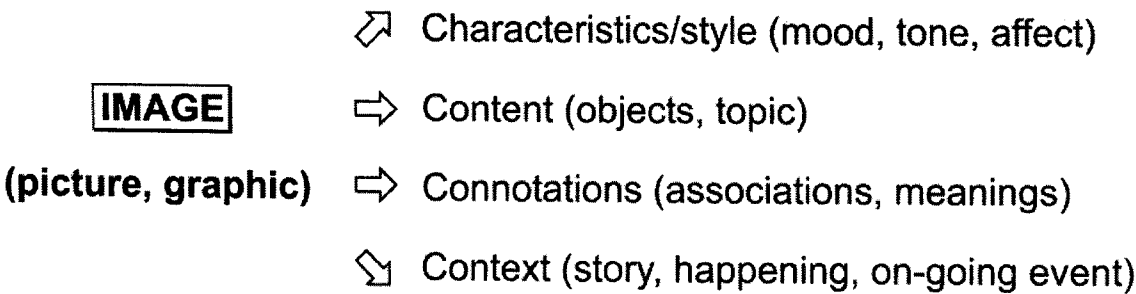
2.3.3 Theories for Marketing Imagery

Various academics declare that Central Government now makes extensive use of promotional techniques to promote self interest (Walsh, 1994; Bean & Hussey, 1997). An example of which is Government Agencies developing brands to promote services and to preserve self interest via the 'brand' consumers. According to Belch & Belch (2007) the creative strategy used to sell these products is based on the development of a strong, memorable identity for the brand through image advertising. Branthwaite (2002) explains that visual imagery has potential powerful effects on human psychology and physiology, affecting ideas, perceptions, behaviours and health. Berger (1972) supports this view from a differing perspective affirming that seeing comes before words. A child looks and recognises before it can speak. Gregory (1966) continues (as cited within Lacey, 1998) that the majority of people rely on sight to such a large extent that they neglect other senses. The paraphrase 'seeing is believing' is such a powerful idea that most people accept it as true.

Branthwaite (2002) claims that the expert use of images provides an effective route to building and sustaining customer relationships, providing it is done successfully. Eysenck & Keane (2000) explains that the viewing of real objects, pictures or scenes, and the same objects imagined have almost identical properties in the workings in the mind. This argument is supported by Branthwaite (2002) who goes on to state that Einstein arrived at his theory of relativity not by abstract thought or mathematical calculation, but by "visualizing effects, consequences and possibilities". Similarly when developing 'rich pictures' which are commonly utilised within soft system methodology theory, the analysts' first task is to 'express' the problem situation to form a *rich picture*. This 'picture' must be assembled without imposing any particular preconceptions on it. This is really a metaphor for 'thorough, but non-judgmental understanding' (which is acquired through normal investigative techniques) but has become associated in Soft Systems Methodology with a particular kind of diagrammatic representation of the problem situation (Hicks, 2004). On a very different basis Greenfield (2000) suggests using neuro-physiological evidence that we use the same areas of the brain for vision and visual imagination, taking this further she claims "imagination is vision running backwards".

According to Branthwaite (2002) imagery is processed episodically, in the terms of situations, participants, what is happening, an on-going event, the emotions and experiences of the people. We relate to emotions of the situation and characteristics and qualities of the image. Branthwaite illustrates this theory within his ‘Facets of an image (the 4 Cs)’ taking his view further defining the expert use of images provides an effective route to building and sustaining consumer\customers relationships by: Clarity as to what an image is; The image should be simple and direct and the presentation should engage and communicate mood, emotion and brand message.

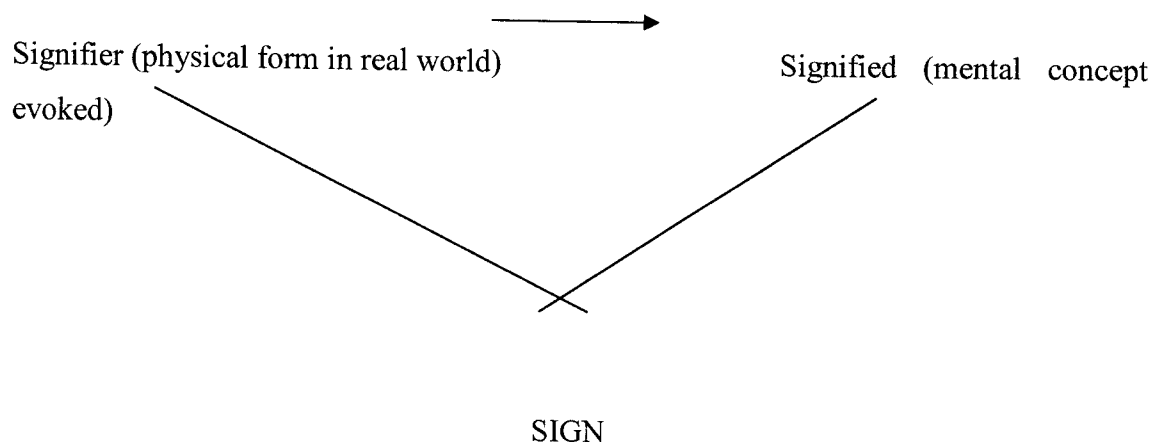
2.3.3.1 Figure 6 – Facets of an image (the 4 Cs) (adapted from Branthwaite, 2002).



2.3.4 Semiotics

The ‘study of signs’ was founded simultaneously and without knowledge of each others work, by Ferinand de Saussure & Charles Piece; they termed their creation semiology and semiotics respectively (the root term is the Greek semeion, sign). Both terms mean the same although the later appears to have gained greater currency with the descriptor being that signs contribute to an understanding of communicative meaning (Lacey, 1998; Bignell, 2002; Van Leeuwen, 2006; Raber & Budd, 2003).

2.3.4.1 Figure 7 – Signifier & Signified (adapted from Lacey, 1998).



According to Lacey (1998) and Danesi (2002) Saussure's approach defined signs structurally. He stated that the sign is the sum of the signifier and the signified: the signifier is the perception of the signs physical form which may be material, acoustic, visual, perception, olfactory or a taste; the signified is the mental concept we learn to associate with that object see figure 7. An example relating to Government benefits (the signifier) this evokes a mental concept of a government building or the completion of forms (the signified); the combination of sound, image, perception (a screened office environment with a member of staff shouting 'next' through the glass). Although the signifier and the signified are separate for the purpose of the analysis, in our perception of the sign they are inseparable.

Danesi (2002) claims that semiotic method, is fundamental because it focuses almost exclusively on hidden meanings. So if signs communicate hidden messages, then can this concept be converted to images and the signs and perceptions drawn from the imagery be utilised to communicate hidden messages (Lacey, 1998). According to Clarke, Kell, Schmidt & Vignali (1998) De Saussure states that meanings derive from the priorities which people perceive and construct from their active interpretation of largely linguistic signs and, therefore, the learning of these codes by the researcher provides a means of viewing the world from the vantage point as the interpreter. However Peirce's work, by contrast, served to provide an extended view of semiosis as the process of communication of imagery by any type of sign (Clarke et al, 1998; Bignell, 2002; Raber & Budd, 2003). Within the study of imagery Branthwaite's (2002)

view is similar to semiotics; he claims that to examine more directly the effects of visual imagery there is another approach based on synaesthesia. This literally means 'experiencing together' and people who have imagery often experience this overlap in sensations across different senses. For example, an image viewed by a parent of a child playing happily in a day care centre may give rise to the emotional feelings of security and visual delight that the child is in a safe/happy environment. Likewise according to Branthwaite (2002) seeing images of sadness, anger, or fear can be differentiated by cardiovascular changes in the viewer, in other words images have a more direct connection to feelings and unconscious ideas.

2.4 Conceptual model

This research attempts to take elements from a number of traditional models of advertisement\communication and creative theories of measurements. Firstly from Checkland's (2001) soft system methodology mnemonic CATWOE it takes the 'W' within the mnemonic which is defined as *weltanschauung* or Worldview, this concept is being utilised to help described what is going on in the wider world with lone parents that is influencing and shaping the "situation". This element of the research is pertinent to test Lacey (1998) and Mower & Minor (2001) concept that every individual interprets images and messages differently (reference 1 on conceptual model).

From Strong (1925) it takes Attention, Interest, Decision and Action to ascertain if in fact the images drawn from Jobcentre Plus will encourage the lone parent customer to act on their needs and wants from the outset as suggested by Cohn (2003) and Groucutt (2005) in their descriptors of marketing references 5, 5a, 5b and 5c within the conceptual model. The attention element of Strong's model will also include the "receivers decode" element of from the communication model to analyse if lone parents decode a message from the image alone (reference 3 within the conceptual model) (Mower & Minor, 2001; Proctor 2007; Evans, Moutinho & Van Raaij, 1997; Hoyer & MacInnis 2007; Lacey, 1998).

The zone of tolerance theory will be utilised to ascertain if the knowledge that the image\marketing communications is from a Government Agency cause delight or

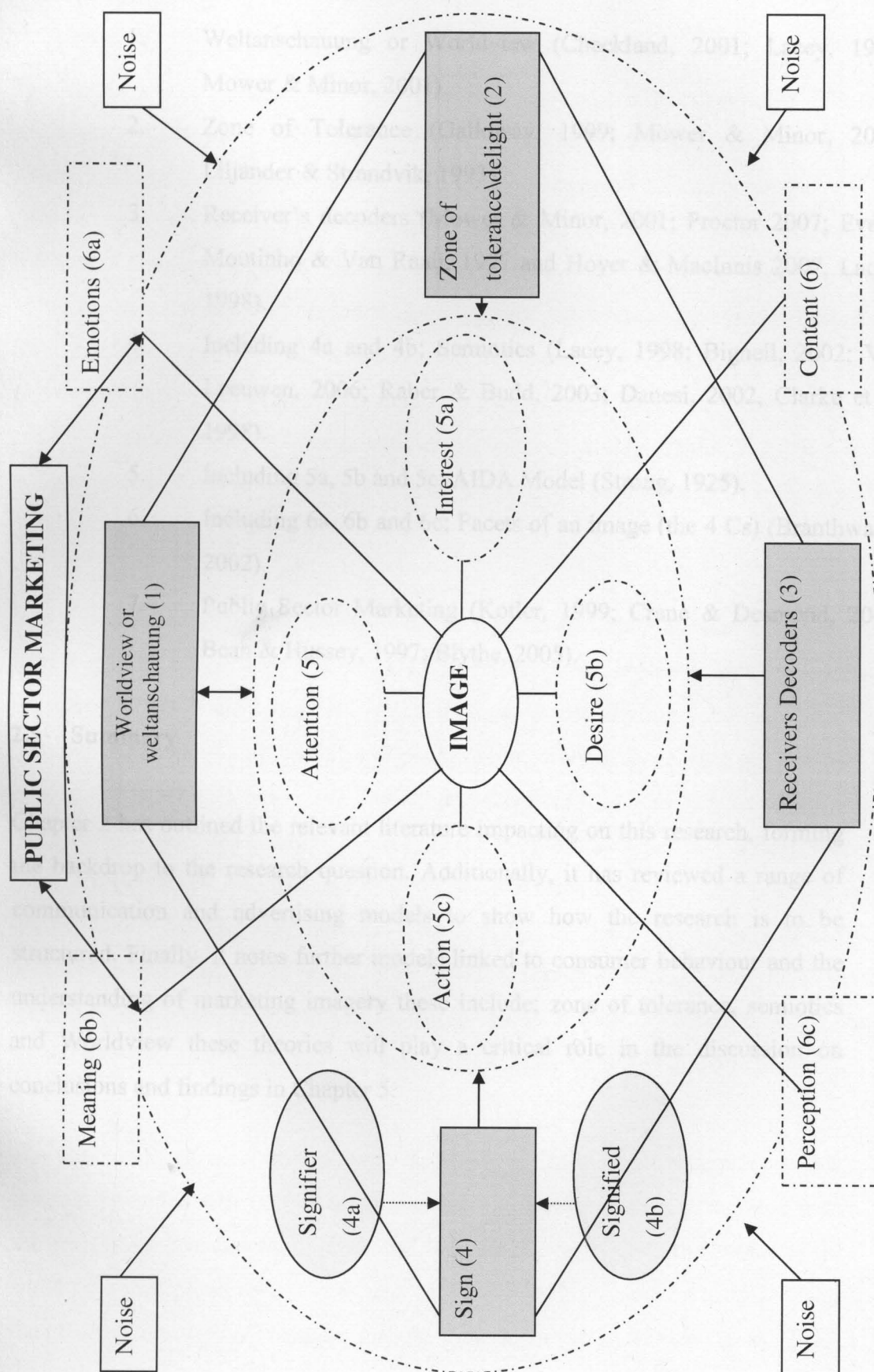
dissatisfaction and why this notion is formulated (linked into reference 2 on the conceptual model) (Galloway, 1999; Mower & Minor, 2001; Liljander & Strandvik, 1993).

Semiotics will be utilised within the conceptual model to test Danesi (2002) claims that semiotic methods is fundamental because it focuses almost exclusively on hidden meanings. The signifier and signified models (linked into reference 4, 4a and 4b on the conceptual model), (Lacey, 1998; Bignell, 2002; Van Leeuwen, 2006; Raber & Budd, 2003; Clarke et al, 1998).

Finally Branthwaite (2002) “Facets of an image (the 4 Cs)” model will be utilised taking this view further by defining the clarity as to what an image is; The image should be simple and direct and the presentation should engage and communicate mood, emotion, brand message, content and the perception (this element is linked to 6, 6a, 6b and 6c of the conceptual model).

The overarching link within the conceptual model is Marketing within the public sector as defined by Kotler (1999); Crane & Desmond (2002); Bean & Hussey (1997); Blythe (2005). This activity is reference 7 within the conceptual model.

This model will form the basis for the questionnaire and focus groups and provides a sounding board to critique the approach against other measurement studies such as consumer behaviour, semiotics, zones of tolerance and worldview.



2.4.2 Reference\Authors linked to the numbered reference on each element of the conceptual model

1. Weltanschauung or Worldview (Checkland, 2001; Lacey, 1998; Mower & Minor, 2001).
2. Zone of Tolerance (Galloway, 1999; Mower & Minor, 2001; Liljander & Strandvik, 1993).
3. Receiver's decoders (Mower & Minor, 2001; Proctor 2007; Evans, Moutinho & Van Raaij, 1997 and Hoyer & MacInnis 2007, Lacey, 1998).
4. Including 4a and 4b; Semiotics (Lacey, 1998; Bignell, 2002; Van Leeuwen, 2006; Raber & Budd, 2003; Danesi, 2002, Clarke et al, 1998).
5. Including 5a, 5b and 5c; AIDA Model (Strong, 1925).
6. Including 6a, 6b and 6c; Facets of an image (the 4 Cs) (Branthwaite, 2002).
7. Public Sector Marketing (Kotler, 1999; Crane & Desmond, 2002; Bean & Hussey, 1997; Blythe, 2005).

2.5 Summary

Chapter 2 has outlined the relevant literature impacting on this research, forming the backdrop to the research question. Additionally, it has reviewed a range of communication and advertising models to show how the research is to be structured. Finally, it notes further models linked to consumer behaviour and the understanding of marketing imagery these include; zone of tolerance, semiotics and Worldview these theories will play a critical role in the discussion on conclusions and findings in Chapter 5.

3 Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The methodology utilised for this research was carefully considered following discussions with peers and colleagues on the engagement and response rates to marketing initiatives from unemployed lone parents. Plus an analysis of the performance data also featured within the decision making. The dialogue with the internal audiences majored on the response rates to marketing campaigns and communication strategies founded through engagement with the lone parent customers. This dialogue identified that response rates for marketing initiatives are 1% to 3%. Having also scrutinised performance data for 'mandatory' lone parent interviews (thus aiming to ascertain possible responses to the research strategies) this verified a fail to attend rate of 19.4% to mandatory Jobcentre Plus interviews between September 2007 and December 2007 (Anonymous, 2008).

The philosophical approach for this research was decided upon as phenomenological to gain a greater insight into the research, an interpretivist approach has been adopted. Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2007) explain that in symbolic interactionism we are in a continual process of interpreting the social world around us, in that we interpret the actions of others with whom we interact and this interpretation leads to adjustment of our own meanings and actions. Weber (1971) believed that things that exist in space are merely appearances, and have no independent existence from our thoughts. The social world cannot be described without investigating how individuals use language and symbols to construct what social practices and experiences mean for them. Further describing this approach Fisher (2007) and Saunders et al (2007) affirm that it is crucial for the interpretivists' epistemology that the researcher adopts an empathetic stance.

The philosophy of an epistemological approach to the methodology dictates that the data collected will largely be qualitative. Qualitative data is associated with the attempt to say something about the way people experience the social world and their social relationships. It is also concerned with the attempt to understand the interpretations and meanings people give to things (Saunders et al, 2007;

Fisher, 2007). Fisher (2007) explains that interpretative researchers are often participants in the process they are studying this paradigm is reinforced within this research as the desire is to make the research and the findings accessible to those working to engage with lone parents within Jobcentre Plus, including advisers and the marketing community.

3.2 Methodological considerations

3.2.1 Justification for the selected paradigm and methodology

The phenomenological approach has been selected as the research and it will largely be inductive, based on the researcher's interaction with 3 focus groups which will be made up of 12 unemployed lone parents or those with recent experience of being an unemployed lone parent. The qualitative research methods developed for this research are "face-to-face" contact with people in the research setting, together with verbal data and observations. Additional interaction will be sought with experts within the field who engage with lone parents, these include Jobcentre Plus. In addition, the study is based on 5 discrete images utilised by Jobcentre Plus to encourage lone parents back into employment.

This research will be based on a combined approach the methodology chosen will include focus groups and the use of a questionnaire, Fisher (2007) states that this approach provides the researcher with a cross-sectional study over a set time period. According to Saunders et al (2007) the combination of different methods gives a much more rounded picture of someone's life and behaviour. Thus, the researcher could observe a respondent's behaviour and make notes about it using a form of participant observation this approach also allows the researcher to question participants about why they did particular things, why they behaved in one way rather than another and so forth.

To support the research strategy a detailed review of 'secondary data' has been conducted, this consists of sources other than the personal researches. The sources of secondary data include such things as: reference books, journal articles obtained from

the Emerald database. The collations of this secondary research will aid the researchers understanding of marketing imagery.

Focus groups were decided on as a methodology as this would enable directed discussion where views are aired and debated. The aim of the discussion is to educate an understanding of why particular viewpoints are held. Fisher (2007) describes a focus group as an open mode of discussion in which a group of people are brought together to have free flowing, but focused discussions on a particular topic.

Secondly the questionnaire methodology was decided upon as this element of the research, as it would not be influenced by peer groups, therefore it would be an individual and unique response to the questioning. This will enable the researcher to collate lone parents' opinions to Jobcentre Plus's marketing imagery (a questionnaire on each of the 5 discrete images will be completed by the lone parents who attend the focus groups).

In terms of internal validity, the customer group of 12 lone parents has no obvious reason for providing distorted answers. However, the nature of the questions for the research will be about making the shift from unemployment to employment, in a 'discussion group' environment which will be co-ordinated by Jobcentre Plus. Although lone parents are not statutory obliged to actively seek employment to receive benefits, it would be naive to assume that the responses will be devoid of any influence from their environs.

3.2.2 Rejected methods

The rejected methods are detailed below and the reasoning for this.

1. A postal questionnaire: this was considered as a way tackling a quantitative approach but was rejected as response rates from lone parents to direct mail can be as low as 1%. Also, DWP has put a ban on the transfer of all computerised scans which hold customers details due to the Her Majesty Revenue and Customs (HMRC) mis-placing a disc with customers' personal data (BBC, 2007a). The researcher was also of the opinion that this form of

- questionnaire would not give opportunity to explore the thoughts of the respondents.
2. Relying solely on a number of interviews with experts within the field i.e. Jobcentre Plus and advertising agencies working with lone parents was rejected, as it overlooked the key component of the research i.e. lone parents.
 3. Focus groups without the questionnaire component were rejected as the researcher felt that although this methodology could work, it would require a very skilled facilitator to get both the volume and depth of information needed to aid the primary research. Also, it could be a high risk, relying on this method to maintain the lone parents' interest for what would be prolonged focus groups.
 4. Semi-structured interviews were rejected as a research method for 2 reasons, firstly the amount of time it would take to support the completion of 12 semi-structured interviews. Secondly having also scrutinised performance data for 'mandatory' lone parent interviews (thus aiming to ascertain possible responses to the research strategies) this data verified a "fail to attend" rate of 19.4% to mandatory Jobcentre Plus interviews between September 2007 and December 2007 (Anonymous, 2008).
 5. The research method ethnography was rejected as a tool for this dissertation as this form of research focuses upon describing and interpreting the social world through first hand field study (Bloor et al, 2002; Saunders et al, 2007). The researcher and Jobcentre Plus would have to undertake rigorous risk assessments for this activity, plus ethical authority would have to be obtained via the Jobcentre Plus board and a willing participant found to participate. The timeline for the completion of this dissertation would not allow sufficient time to complete this form of research.
 6. A Dictaphone was rejected as a research tool, as the researcher did not want participants to feel hindered when providing answers to the research questions within the focus group environment.

3.3 Research design

3.3.1 Images utilised for the Research

The images utilised within the research are images which have recently been used to engage with lone parents for Jobcentre Plus national and regional marketing campaigns. Refer to Appendix 1 (images 1 to 5) for images.

3.3.2 Identifying lone parents to participate in the research

The lone parent customer group, with which the study is concerned, have somewhat dictated the crux of where the 3 focus groups will be undertaken, the reason for this being:

- Jobcentre Plus is currently working in partnership with the Blacon Neighbourhood Management Group, after conducting a joint jobs fair with them in Blacon. Attendees of the jobs fair were surveyed to see if they would be interested in being included in any focus groups. A number of lone parent customers agreed that they would like to be part of such a group. Jobcentre Plus also has a weekly presence within the local children's centre with a New Deal Lone Parent Adviser conducting mandatory work focused interviews. To obtain a wide sample of lone parents for this research the researcher highlighted a mix of lone parents who are currently caseloaded by Jobcentre Plus and those who did not want to participate in Jobcentre Plus services. Lastly, those who had attended, or were considering attending, a training initiative co-ordinated by West Cheshire College within Blacon were invited to participate. All were included in the sample.
- Blacon is geographically based within Chester city and consists of 2 electoral wards Blacon Hall and Blacon Lodge. Both wards are placed within the top 10% of the deprivation index. The Geographical Information System (2007) provides an insight into all electoral wards throughout the United Kingdom, this indicates that 965 lone parents reside in Chester of which 341 (35.3%) live in Blacon. Based on 3 focus groups consisting of a total of 12 lone parents or those with recent experience of being an unemployed lone parent this is a 3.5% sample of lone parents.

An initial telephone call will be made to lone parents explaining the details of the research and asking them if they would like to participate. For those who agree they will be offered a venue and time which is convenient for them. The telephone call will be followed up with a letter detailing the time, date and venue of the focus group. A second telephone call will be made two days prior to the focus group to remind lone parents about it.

This method of customer contact was decided upon for a number of reasons, one of which being DWP currently have a ban on obtaining scans of customer data which are utilised for customer engagement. The ban is as a result of HRMC misplacing a disc which contained customers' personal details (BBC, 2007a).

3.3.3 Focus Groups

According to Bloor et al (2002) focus groups will provide rich data on the group meanings associated with a given issue for example, the pre-determined mix of audience will determine the outcome. Threlfall (1999) supports this argument stating that the dynamics of the symbolic interaction throughout the group process nurtures various points of view without pressuring outcomes and allows for a level of true compassion on the topic to arise from the discussion.

Three focus groups are to be arranged within Blacon, the venues that have been decided upon are located within walking distance for those to be invited. The venues are to be on neutral ground so not to deter those who are biased towards Jobcentre Plus. Two focus groups will be undertaken at the children centre in Blacon. This is a purpose built building which accommodates a nursery, health workers and regularly undertakes community activities for local residents. The third focus group will take place at a training centre based within the shopping area at Blacon; again this is an accessible venue at which lone parents feel at ease.

The time and dates of the focus groups were paramount to ensure lone parents undivided attention. Focus groups were held during school term, after school drop off in the morning and prior to school pick up in the afternoon. The researcher also took

account of pre-school children and arranged for nursery spaces with the Blacon Children Centre for any participants who may have required it.

The focus group agenda will consist of an introduction, domestics for the venue, an overview of the research and why they had been invited to partake in it. The activity utilised for this was a power point presentation, with limited slides providing brief data and copies of the images being researched. Each attendee will be given a paper copy of the presentation to take account of those who want to take notes or prefer written correspondence.

Seven questions are to be asked at the end of the focus group presentation which are, directly linked to the conceptual model at figure 2.4.1.1.

1. What do you think when you see each of these marketing images? This question correlates to worldview (Checkland, 2001; Lacey, 1998; Mower & Minor, 2001).
2. Do they mean anything to you? This question links to the receiver decoder theory (Mower & Minor, 2001; Proctor 2007; Evans, Moutinho & Van Raaij, 1997 and Hoyer & MacInnis 2007, Lacey, 1998).
3. Would these images encourage you to look for work? This question links to facets of an image (Branthwaite, 2002).
4. Have you had any negative experiences with Jobcentre Plus? Would this stop you from using the job search services? This question links to the zone of tolerance theory (Galloway, 1999; Mower & Minor, 2001; Liljander & Strandvik, 1993).
5. Are these images attractive to you? This question links to the AIDA model as does question 6 (Strong, 1925).
6. Would these images encourage you to look for a job, if so why? This question also links to the concept of public sector marketing (Kotler, 1999; Crane & Desmond, 2002; Bean & Hussey, 1997; Blythe, 2005).
7. What does the Jobcentre Plus brand mean to you? This question links directly to the semiotics theory (Lacey, 1998; Bignell, 2002; Van Leeuwen, 2006; Raber & Budd, 2003; Danesi, 2002, Clarke et al, 1998).

The focus group discussion sessions will give an opportunity for broader debate of the themes outlined above. As part of the focus group, 5 questionnaires were issued with

each one correlating to an image. This method was utilised as another source of data gathering, primarily to assist in the ‘triangulation’ of the research and enabling contrast (Fisher, 2007; Saunders et al, 2007). The questionnaire will take account of individual’s unique responses to each image without the peer pressure which can exist amongst groups.

3.3.4 Questionnaire

A preliminary check was undertaken on the research questionnaire (Appendix 2) which was to be used at the focus groups. This was conducted by the Jobcentre Plus Work Psychologist. The check was to ensure that there were no inconsistencies with the questionnaire. Whilst producing the questionnaire the ‘plain English’ guidelines were adhered to, for example small words were used such as you, is, do and as. The questions within the questionnaire were kept short; with no more than 20 words and they were concise, for example, sticking to one idea/concept within the question so not to confuse. Where possible ‘active verbs’ were utilised such as “The advert is easy to understand?” (Plain English Campaign, 2008).

During the design of the questionnaire a strategy was adopted to pose questions which directly link to the conceptual model. A series of probing, pre-coded open and pre-coded closed questions were utilised within the questionnaire to enable the researcher to draw accurate information from the lone parent respondents (Brace, 2004).

The questions which will be asked of lone parents within the questionnaire will correlate directly to the conceptual model at 2.4.1.1, a series of up to 20 questions will be put to lone parents for each of the 5 images utilised within the research. These questions will link directly to the theories utilised within the design of the conceptual model.

- Question 1, 2, 6 and 14 link to the AIDA model as defined by Strong (1925).
- Questions 3, 7 link to receivers decoders as defined by (Mower & Minor, 2001; Proctor 2007; Evans, Moutinho & Van Raaij, 1997; Hoyer & MacInnis, 2007; Lacey, 1998).
- Questions 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 14 link to the Facets of an image (the 4 Cs) as defined by Branthwaite (2002).

- Questions 10, 12, 13, 17, 19 links to the zone of tolerance theory as described by (Galloway, 1999; Mower & Minor, 2001; Liljander & Strandvik, 1993).
- Questions 11, 18 and 19 link to semiotics described by (Lacey, 1998; Bignell, 2002; Van Leeuwen, 2006; Raber & Budd, 2003; Danesi, 2002, Clarke et al, 1998), and lastly;
- Questions 15, 16, 19 and 20 link to weltanschauung or worldview, as described by (Checkland, 2001; Lacey, 1998; Mower & Minor, 2001).

Within the design of the questionnaire, the same question will be asked twice (question 4 and 5), this technique will be utilised to ascertain if lone parent respondents are reading and understanding the questions posed and to provoke debate amongst the group (Fisher, 2007; Saunders et al, 2007).

3.4 Research procedures

1. As a result of the research design discussed in chapter 3.3 2 the following elements are to be taken into consideration. The researcher anticipated that a note taker would be beneficial at the focus groups to ensure that discussions are fully detailed and that the 'noise' within the group does not distract from discussion aims.
2. The researcher who facilitated the focus groups has to ensure that the agenda is adhered to and that discussions do not focus on the Government agenda and benefit rates.
3. A risk assessment of the premises must be completed prior to the focus groups taking place to ensure a safe environment for all in attendance.

3.4.1 Reliability or Dependability

The traditional quantitative view of reliability is based on the assumption of replicability or repeatability (Trochim, 2006). Considerations must be sought on the reliability of the research utilised and collected by the researcher, since if the data used is not reliable, then the conclusions drawn on this data are going to be fairly useless (Fisher, 2007 & Saunders et al, 2007). In an attempt to check the reliability of a

response to the questionnaire the researcher has asked the same questions in a slightly different way, for example:

- The advert attracts your attention?
- The advert is attractive?

3.4.2 Triangulation

Within the primary research design the researcher will use 2 independent sources of data. According to Fisher (2007) and Saunders et al (2007) a weakness in one method can be avoided by using a second method that is strong in the area that the first is weak. The method deployed is detailed within paragraph 3.3.3.

3.4.3 Transferability

Transferability refers to the degree to which the results of qualitative research can be generalised or transferred to other contexts or settings. From a qualitative perspective transferability is primarily the responsibility of the one doing the generalising (Fisher, 2007; Saunders et al, 2007; Trochim, 2006).

3.4.4 Validity

The questionnaire utilised within the research will be checked for validity an explanation is detailed at paragraph 3.3.4. This check, will aid the researcher throughout preparation and design of the research instruments (Fisher, 2007 & Saunders et al, 2007).

3.5 Ethical considerations

Blumberg et al (2005:92), (is cited within Saunders et al, 2007) as defining ethics as the 'moral principles, norms or standards of behaviour that guide moral choices about our behaviour and our relationships with others'. In supporting this academic suggestion an explanation will be made to lone parents who participate in the research that all the data obtained will be entirely confidential and the findings will be made available to all participants. If there are any exceptions to this confidentiality and customer details are required as a result of this research then the lone parents involved will be contacted and

a full explanation will be provided and justified. Each customer will be asked at the focus group to sign a DWP consent form (at their will) which will provide the researcher with written consent to share their details (only as a result of this research and if necessary).

The identity of the researcher and note taker must be made explicit, including the attachment to any organisations namely Jobcentre Plus. In addition the purpose of the session and the research must be fully explained.

Full account will be taken for those with language, access, impairments for example sight. The premises utilised for the focus groups will have loop hearing systems for those with hearing impairments. Copies of the presentation will be enlarged prior to the focus group so not to single anybody out who may have sight impairment. Saunders et al (2007) affirm that in the context of research, ethics refer to the appropriateness of your behaviour in relation to the rights of those who become the subjects of your work, or are affected by it.

To take account of those with any literacy issues or basic skills in terms of literacy and numeracy, the Plain English Campaign (2008) guidelines will be utilised in terms of the text size on the presentation and questionnaires, the use of words on presentational materials. The note taker and the researcher at the focus groups are qualified within Guidance and will act as a support during the completion of the questionnaires. All presentational materials at the focus groups will be made available to all who attend.

The venues chosen for the focus groups will be 'neutral ground' and those who agree to attend will be offered a time, date and venue which are accessible to them.

The anticipated use of incentives to attract participants to the sessions did not materialise. The difficulties accruing from the debate about the reward being sufficient in value (monetary or perceived) to attract the unemployed and at the

same time not too attractive to counter allegations of 'buying pre-determined views'. This would be an unethical stand point from the researcher's perspective as a member of staff of Jobcentre Plus they would have to disclose the amount given and this could result in a deduction of this amount from the lone parents benefit entitlement. No rewards were offered nor indeed, requested from the participants. Saunders et al (2007) states that researchers will have to ensure that the way they design the research is both methodically sound and morally defensible to all those involved. Zikmund (2002) continues, what is morally defensible behaviour as researchers will be affected by broader social norms of behaviour, this clearly links to the researchers comments on financial incentive.

An equal opportunity monitoring form will be issued to all those who attend the focus groups and participate in the research. This will provide the researcher with accurate information on the make up of the groups.

3.6 Summary

Chapter 3 has outlined the methodology for this research, explaining clearly the tasks undertaken during the course of the study and justifying the approach on both academic and practical grounds

4 Findings

4.1 Introduction

Chapter 3 of the dissertation provides justification and a detailed insight into the methodology utilised for this research. Chapter 4 will reveal the data/information that has been collected from the methodology (as described at chapter 3). The initial findings from the research which are to be detailed in chapter 4 will be the first phase only. A more detailed analysis of the findings will be provided within chapter 5. This chapter will detail and compare the research within chapter 2 which refers to the academic literature on marketing imagery. It links these findings with the research findings as documented within chapter 4 and then makes a direct correlation between the two elements in chapter 5.

Chapter 4 will present the data collected and outline through the use of charts, histograms and graphs emerging patterns and early considerations, which will be more fully explored in chapter 5. The structure of the analysis content of chapter 4 will be formed to include:

The focus group and questionnaire results:

- Histograms of responses to all 5 images by theme for example: Attention
- Bar charts: within the question themes which relate to literature review as explained at chapter 3, for example: AIDA and Semiotics.
- Pie chart.

4.2 Application of methodology

The research method was designed to include both quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative data was gathered from a series of 5 questionnaires each questionnaire linked directly to each of the 5 images utilised within the research, a sequence of 20 questions where asked on each of the 5 images (Appendix 2). The questionnaires where completed by 12 unemployed lone parents who reside in the Blacon wards of Chester. Each unemployed lone parent completed a set of 5 questionnaires; each questionnaire completed was specific to an image, the image number and copy were attached to the questionnaires. Each lone parent answered

a total of 100 questions (20 questions on each image and there were 5 images in total).

The qualitative information was gathered from the same groups of 12 lone parents during the course of a directed discussion, immediately following the discussion the questionnaires were completed.

All the focus group participants were lone parents who reside in the Blacon wards of Chester; figure 9 provides insight into the make up of the groups. The analysis of the lone parents who attended the focus group, mirror that of the national picture which interprets the make up of lone parents via age, nationality and gender Welfare Reform Green Paper (2007); whilst the ethnicity mirror the make up of the Jobcentre Plus District where the study was based (Geographical Information System, 2007).

4.3 Analysis of Participants and none participants in the research

During the planning design of the methodology (as detailed within chapter 3), the researcher was mindful that the lone parents represented in the research symbolised the national and local make up of the lone parent picture nationally. A total of 14 lone parents were invited to participate in the research these customers were identified by various methods as detailed in paragraph 3.3.2. Although 14 lone parent customers were invited to participate and indeed accepted the invitation to be included in the research only 12 turned up at the focus groups which resulted in a 86% response rate. The lone parents who attended were representative of the lone parent findings nationally and locally (Welfare Reform Green Paper, 2007; DWP, 2006). There would appear to be nothing of interest regarding the 2 lone parents who did not turn up at the focus groups which would suggest that the research would be altered in any way.

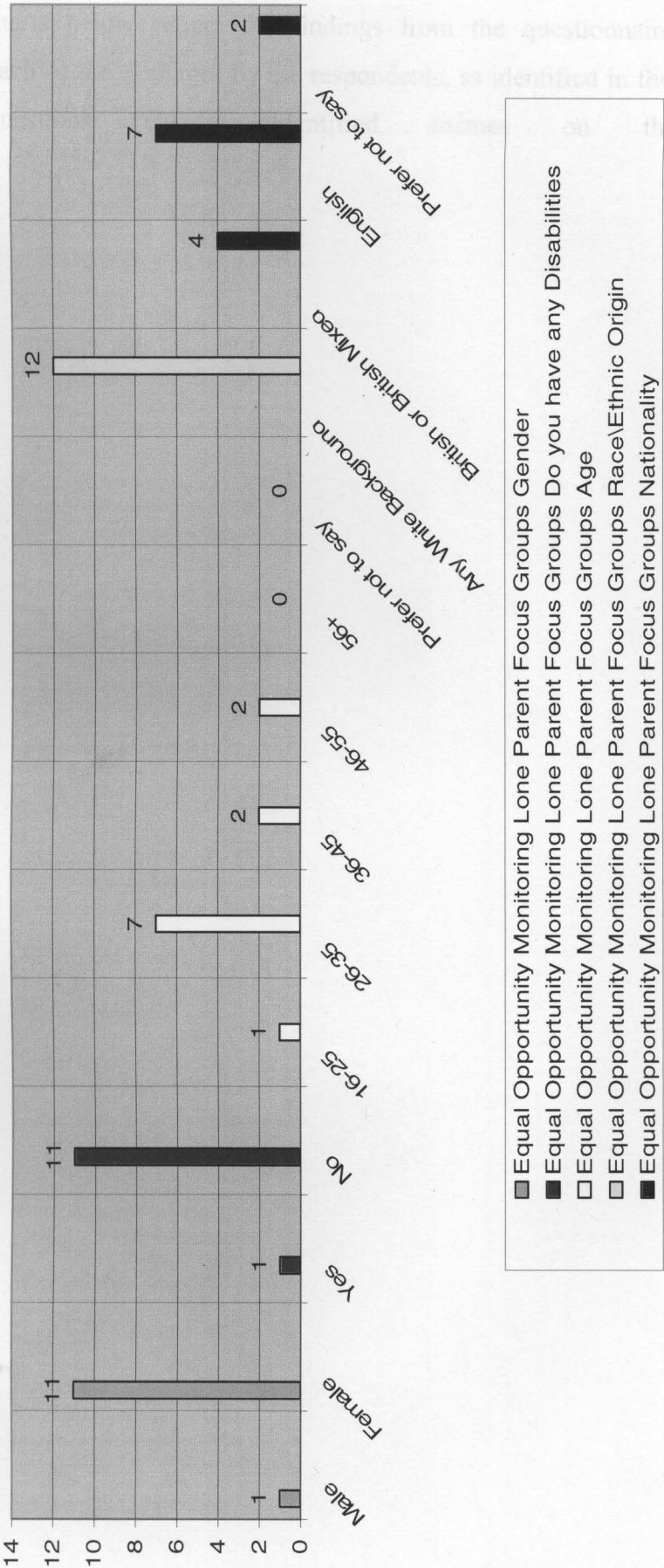
The lone parents who participated in the research attended a focus group as described in chapter 3 each lone parent chose which focus group they attended. The 3 groups differed in their views slightly in terms of the imagery which will be explained in chapter 5. One group consisted of 4 lone parents who were between 16-34 years old, one group consisted of the age range 36-55, and finally one group was set in a training environment, with lone parents again in the younger age range.

One of the focus groups was set in a neighbourhood training environment as explained in chapter 3, as a result 1 lone parent who attended the training session did not participate in the focus group. However, she was present in the room where the focus group discussions took place and was very vocal and aggressive in her manner regarding her personal circumstances and government benefits. I explained to the lone parent that benefits are set via the Government and Jobcentre Plus administer the processes in guidance with the Social Security Act. The researcher's initial thoughts were that this lone parent would influence her peers into responding negatively to the focus group and questionnaire however in the research findings as detailed in chapter 5 this does not appear to be the case.

Figure 9 provides an overall analysis of those who attended and participated in the research.

4.3.1.1 Figure 9 – Equal Opportunity Monitoring of Lone Parents who attended the focus groups

Equal Opportunity Monitoring Lone Parent Focus Groups

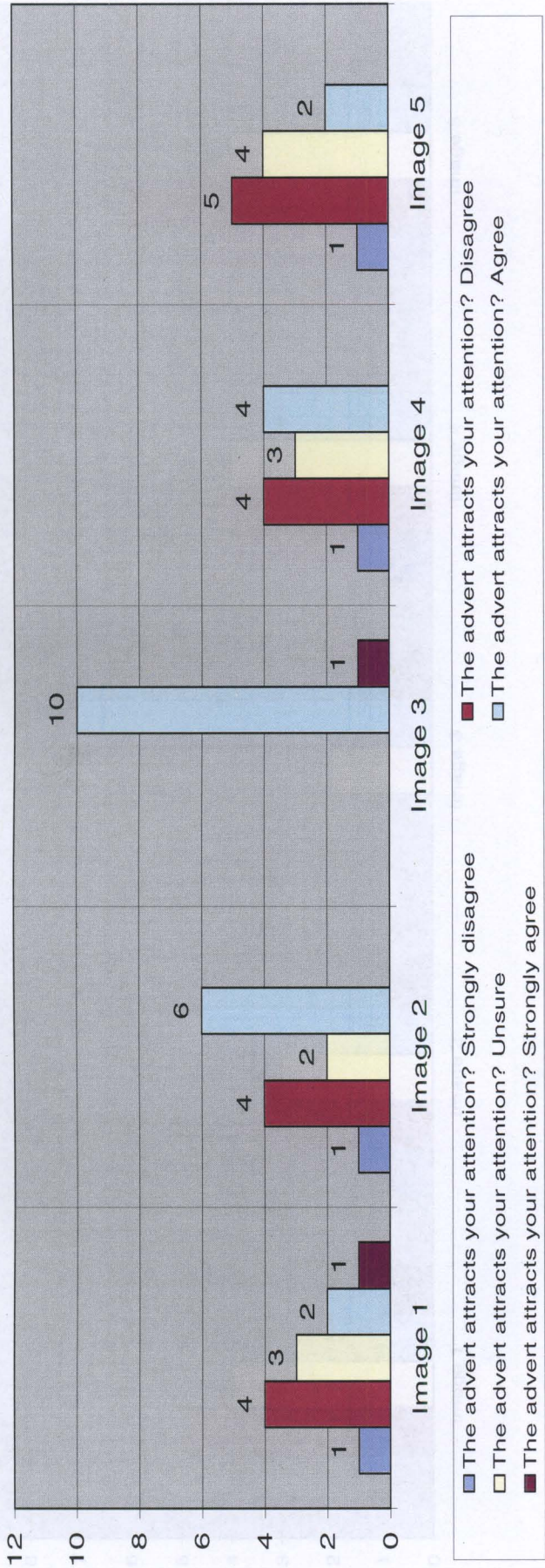


4.4 Questionnaire Findings

A series of charts below reflect the findings from the questionnaires that were completed on each of the 5 images by the respondents, as identified in the charts some of the questions clearly identified themes on the images.

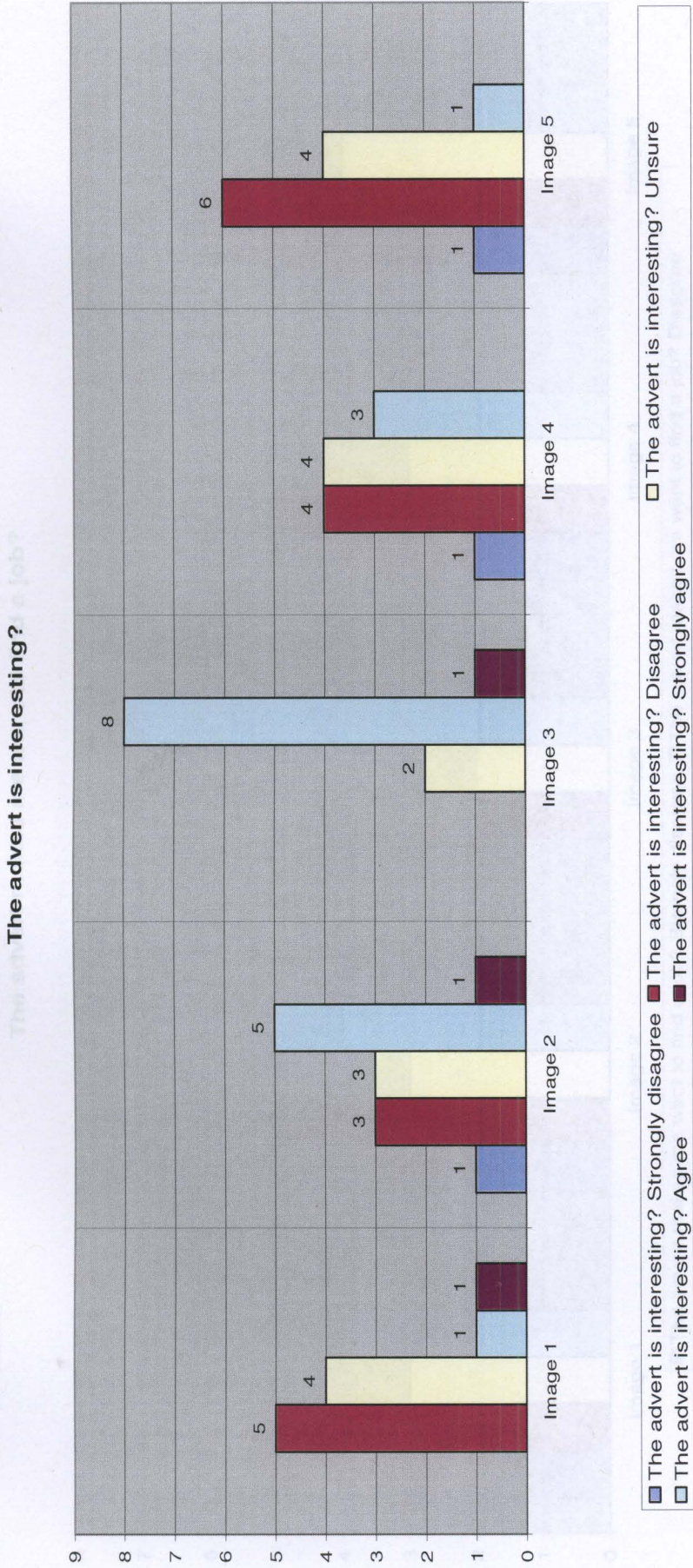
4.3.1.2 Figure 10 – This chart demonstrates the findings from the respondents’ questionnaires, which related to which image ‘attracted attention’ this concept links to the AIDA acronym founded by Strong (1925).

The advert attracts your attention?



This chart reveals the respondents views on which image ‘attracts attention’. The findings indicate that the image that attracts the most attention was image 3, with image 5 attracting the least attention.

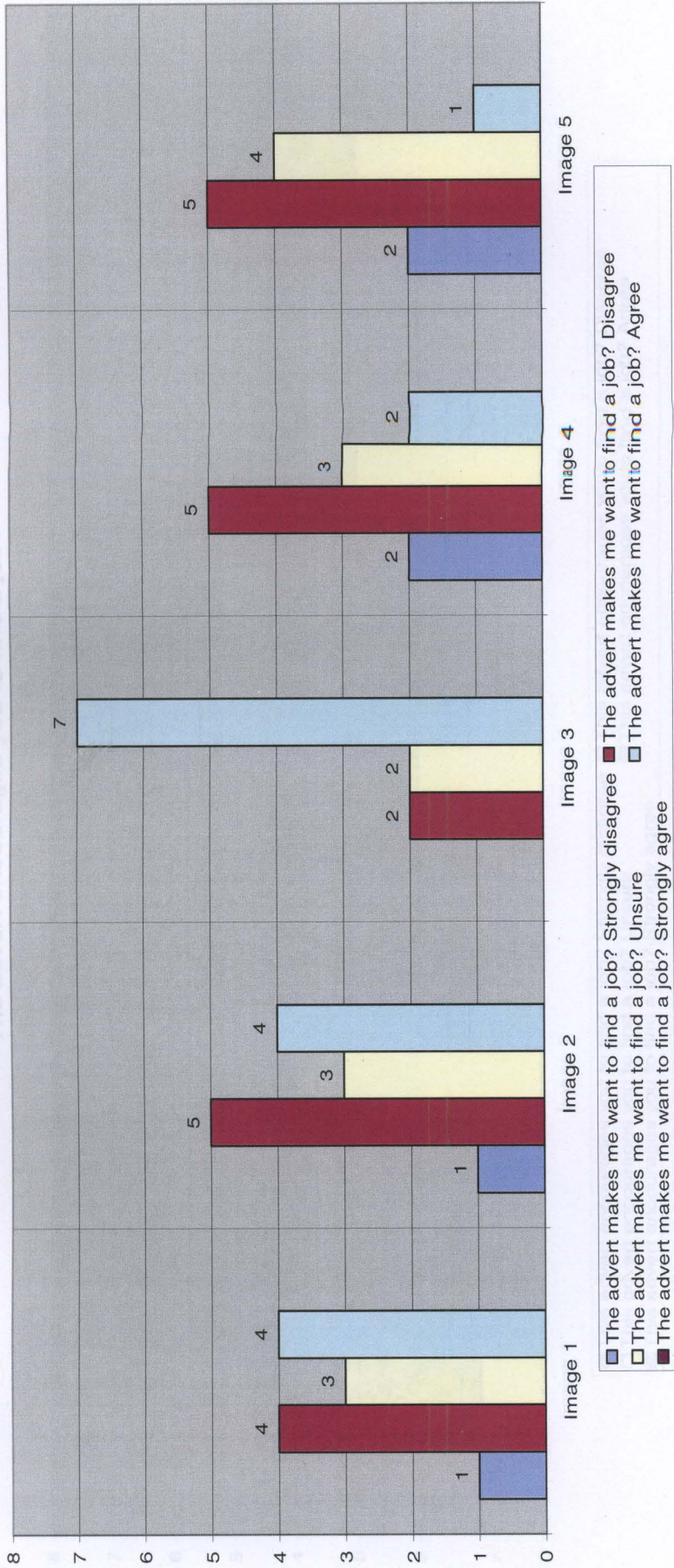
4.3.1.3 Figure 11 - This chart demonstrates the findings from the lone parents' questionnaires, which relate to which image that they found 'Interesting', this concept links directly to 'interest' within the AIDA acronym founded by Strong (1925).



This chart identifies respondents views on which image they find 'interesting'. The findings indicate that the image that respondents found most 'interesting' was image 3, with image 5 being the least 'interesting'.

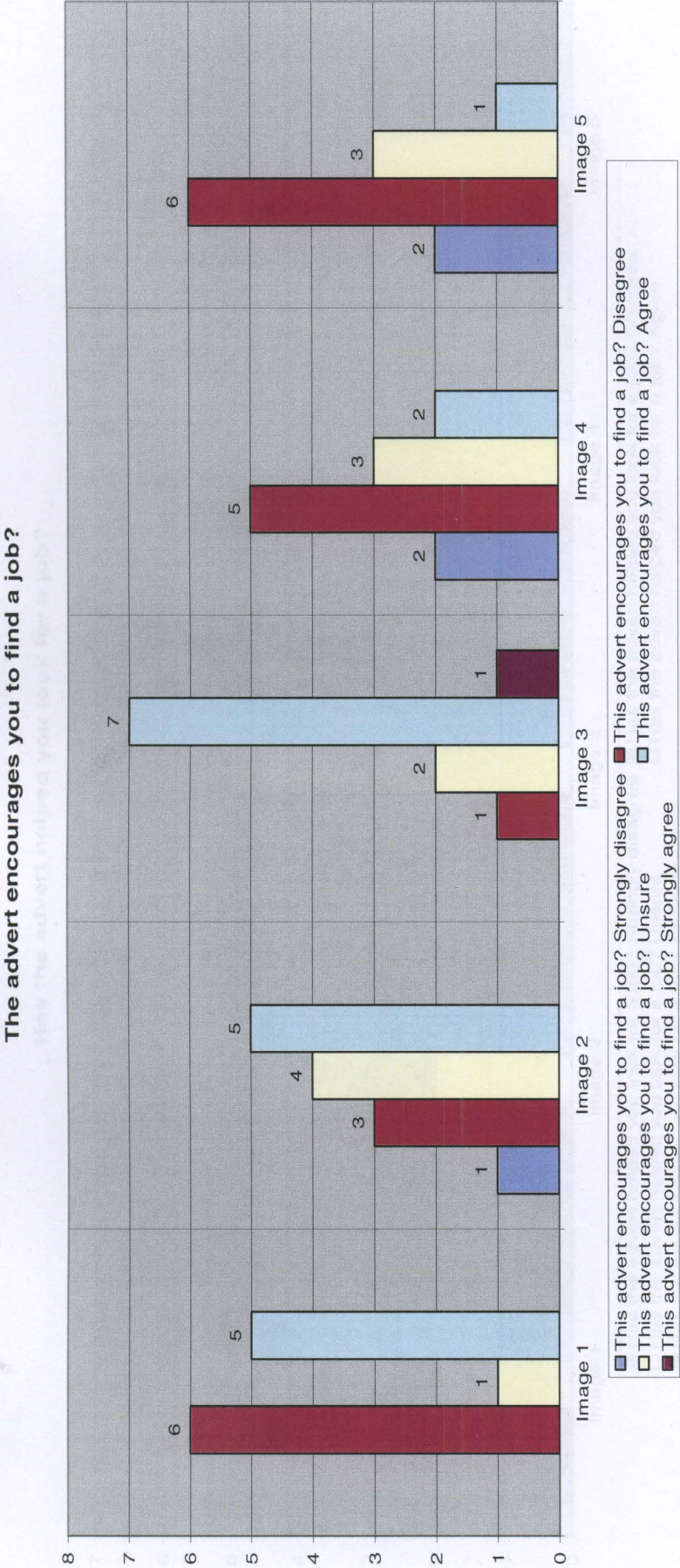
4.3.1.4 Figure 12 – This chart demonstrates the findings from the lone parents’ questionnaires, which relate to which image they thought would make them want to find a job, this concept is linked to ‘desire’ within the AIDA acronym founded by Strong (1925).

The advert makes me want to find a job?



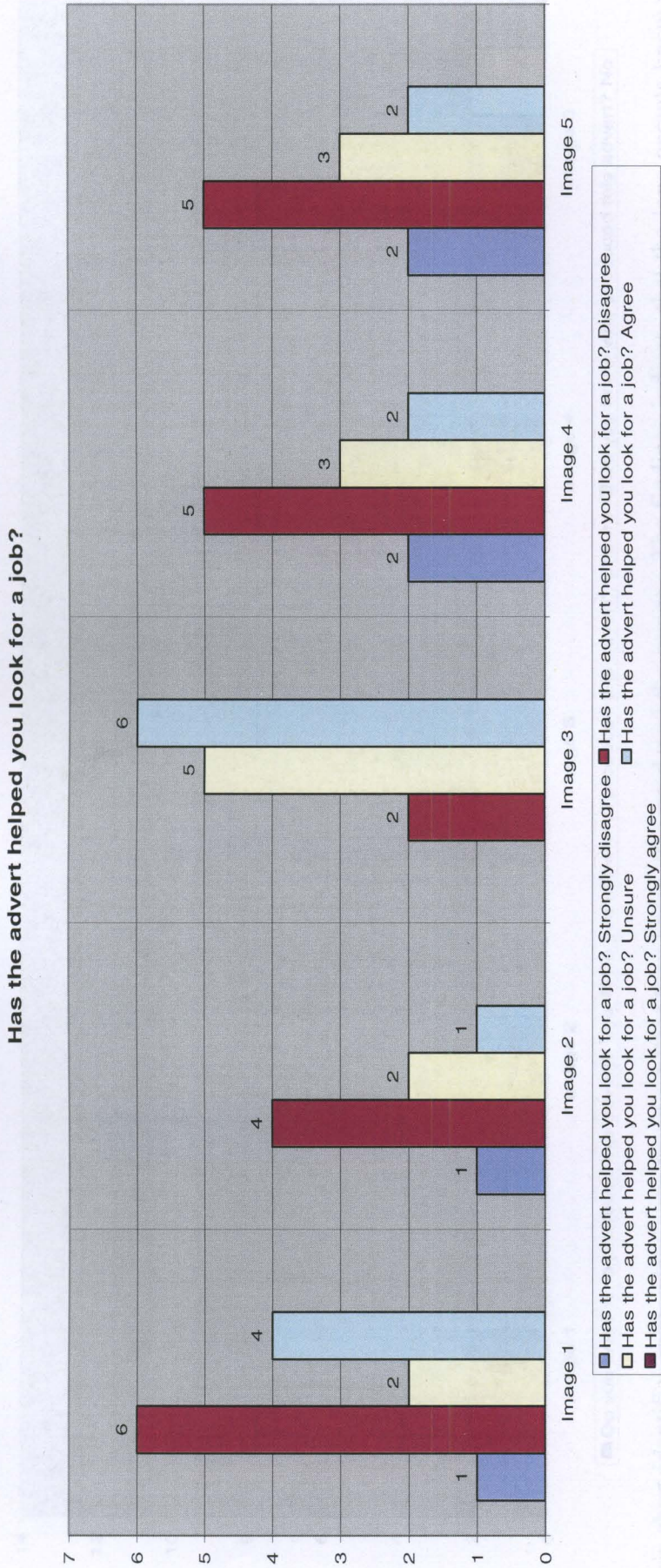
This chart identifies respondents views on which image respondents thought would make them want to find a job. The findings indicate that the image that was most likely to make respondents want to find a job was image 3, with image 5 being the least likely to make them want to find a job.

4.3.1.5 Figure 13 – This chart demonstrates the findings from the lone parents’ questionnaires, which relate to the image that lone parents thought encouraged them to find a job, this concept links directly to the receivers decodes concept as defined by (Mower & Minor, 2001; Proctor 2007; Evans, Moutinho & Van Raaij, 1997; Hoyer & MacInnis, 2007; Lacey, 1998).



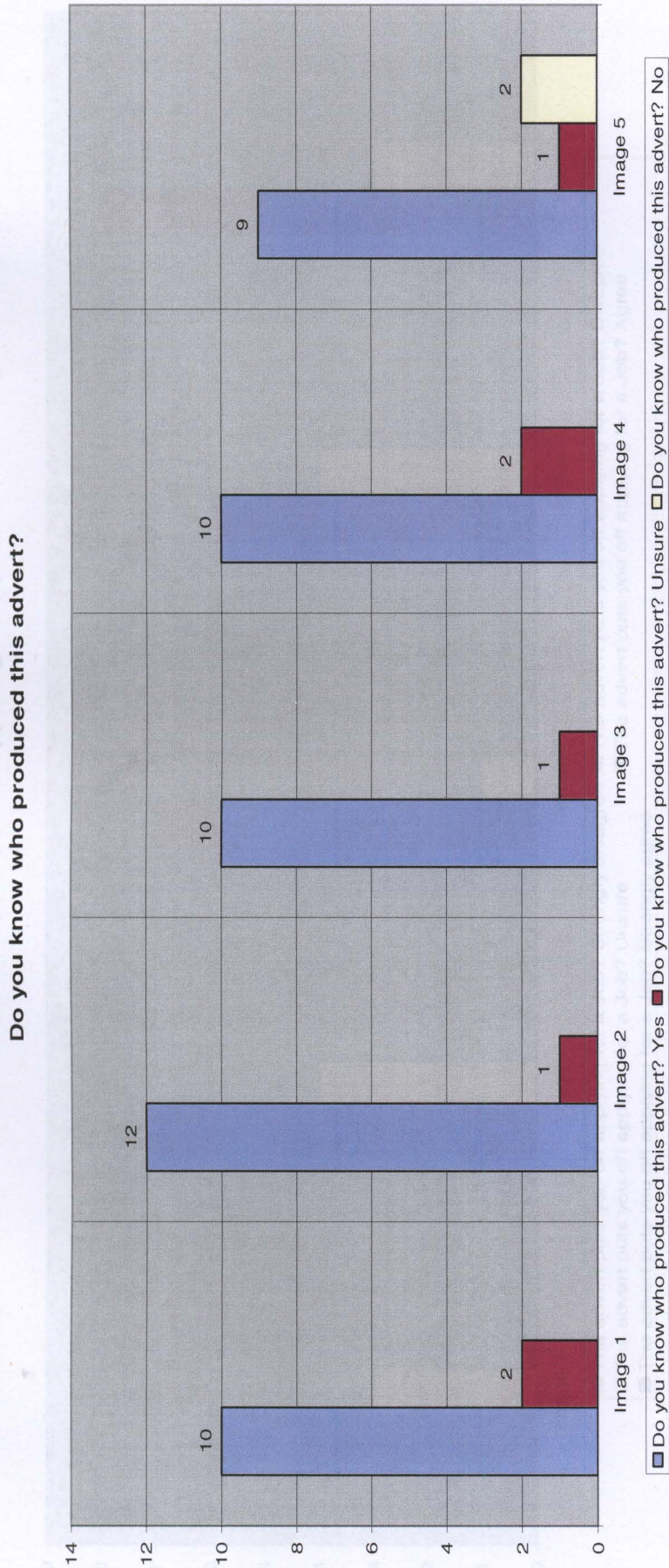
This chart identifies respondents views on which image they thought would encourage them to find a job. The findings indicate that the image that was most likely to encourage respondent’s to find a job was image 3, with image 5 being the least likely to encourage them to find a job.

4.3.1.6 Figure 14 – This chart demonstrates the findings from the lone parents’ questionnaires, on which image has helped them to find a job this concept links directly to the receivers decodes concept as defined by (Mower & Minor, 2001; Proctor 2007; Evans, Moutinho & Van Raaij, 1997; Hoyer & MacInnis, 2007; Lacey, 1998).



This chart identifies respondents views on which image they thought had helped them to look for a job. The findings indicate that the image that encouraged them to find a job was image 3, with image 1, 4 and 5 being the least likely to help them to find a job.

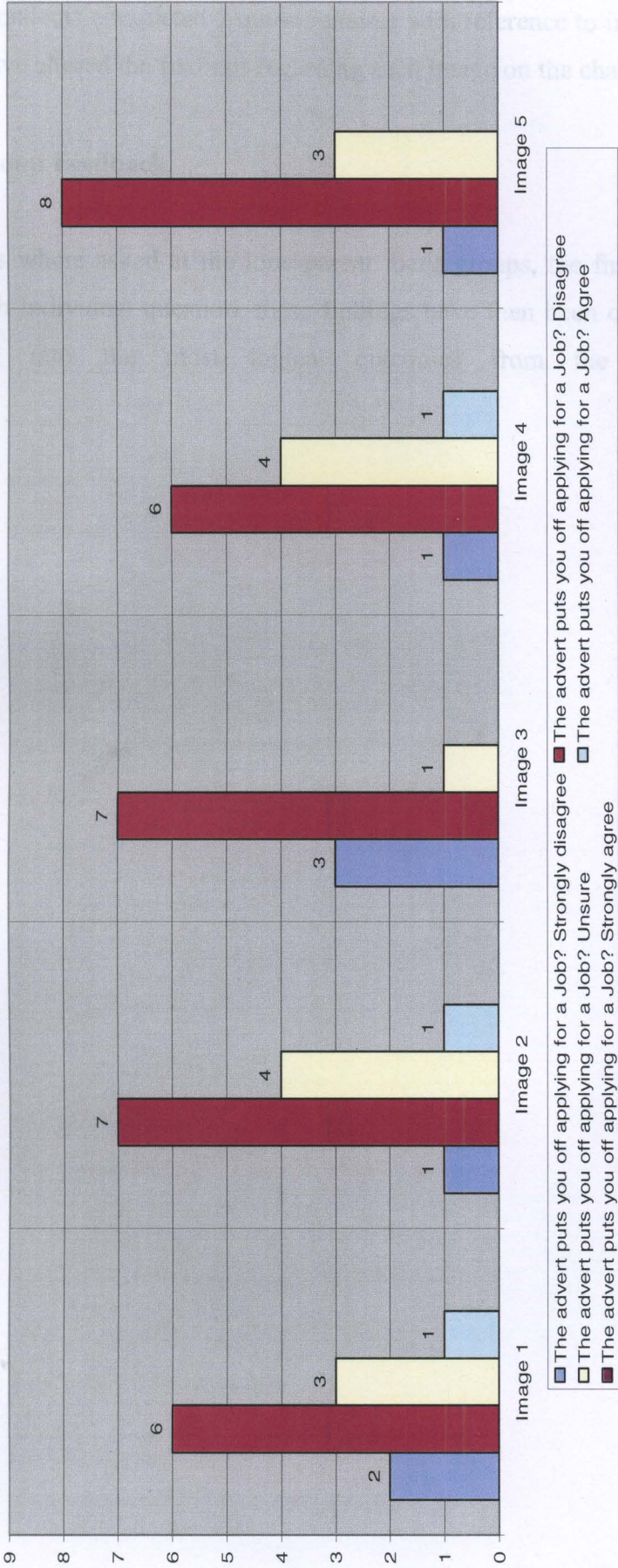
4.3.1.7 Figure 15 - This chart demonstrates the findings from the lone parents' questionnaires, on whether they recognised who had produced the image this concept links directly to 'facets of an image' as defined by Branthwaite (2002).



This chart identifies respondent's views on whether they know who produced the images. The findings indicate that the lone parents knew who had produced all the images with image 5 being the least known. Point to note – an additional questionnaire was completed for image 2 and a questionnaire linked to image 3 was ineligible.

4.3.1.8 Figure 16 – This chart demonstrates the lone parents' feelings to the image that would put them off applying for a job this concept links directly to 'facets of an image' as defined by Branthwaite (2002).

The advert puts you off applying for a job?



This chart identifies respondent's views on whether the image would put them off applying for a job. The findings indicate that the lone parents are not put off applying for job by any of the images; image 3 is the most popular image when applying for a job and image 1 being the least popular. The findings across all the images are very similar.

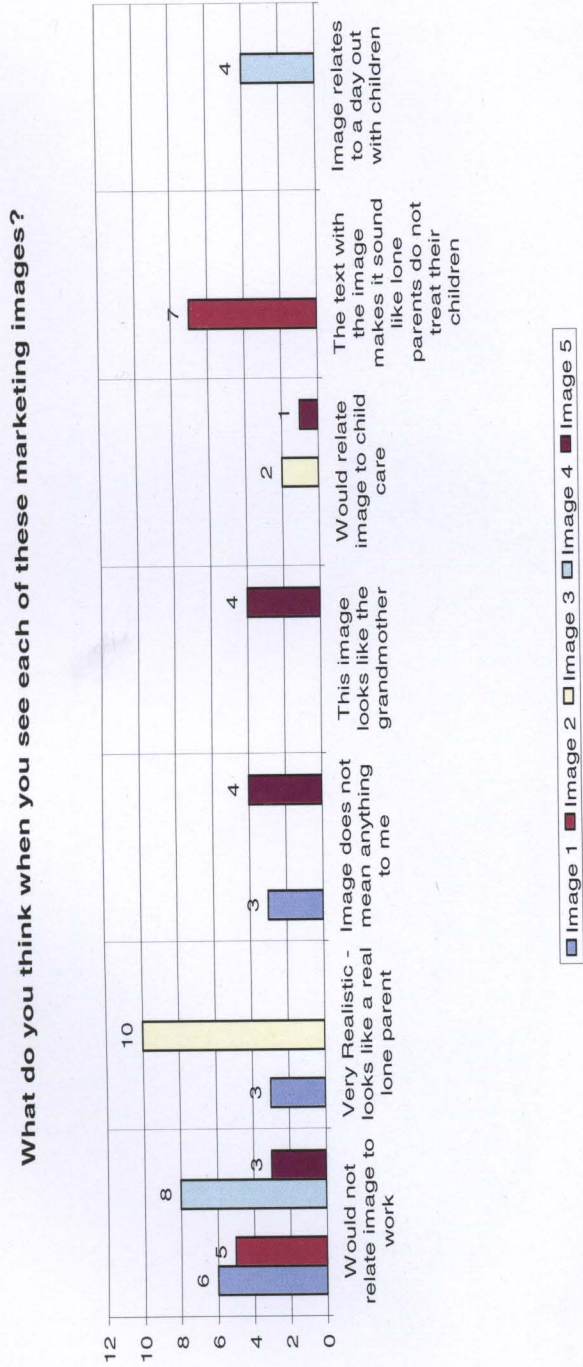
Point to note

One of the respondents completed 2 questionnaires with reference to image 2; this does not appear to have altered the findings regarding each image on the charts.

4.4 Focus Group Feedback

Seven questions were asked at the lone parent focus groups, the findings have been collated by each individual question, these findings have then been collated, analysed and presented into the most topical outcomes from the focus groups.

4.4.1.1 Figure 17 - This chart demonstrates what the lone parents' think about each image this concept links directly to 'Weltanschauung or Worldview' as defined by Checkland (2001).



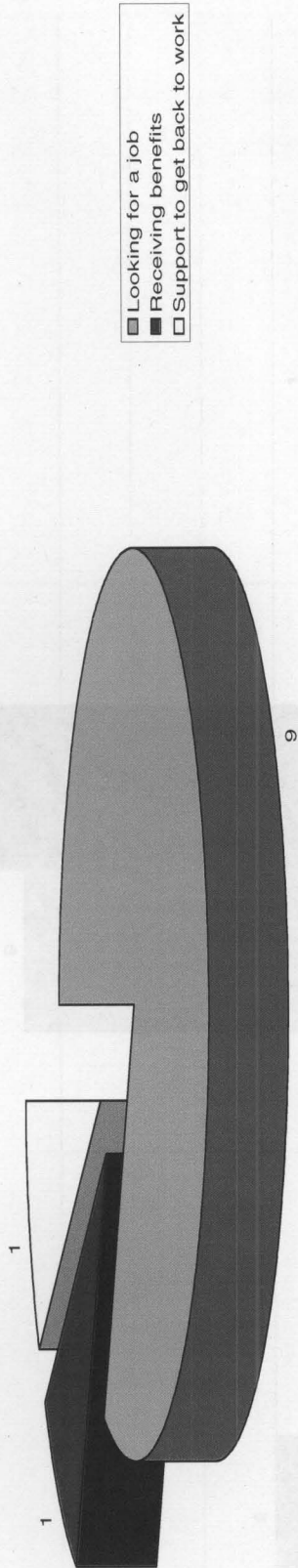
The findings were not conclusive but the image which most of the lone parents had a similar reaction to was image 3 with 10 stating that this image was realistic. Image 4 was the image that lone parents seemed to differ on opinion, some not relating the image to work and others stating that it reminded them of a day on the beach with their children. The overwhelming opinion was that none of the images clearly defined a work environment.

Point to Note

A strong concept which was discussed within the focus groups was that lone parents only related the images to employment if there was a Jobcentre Plus logo on the image. This concept clearly links to the 'semiotics' concept as defined by (Lacey, 1998; Bignell, 2002; Van Leeuwen, 2006; Raber & Budd, 2003; Danesi, 2002, Clarke et al, 1998).

4.4.1.2 Figure 18 – This chart demonstrates what Jobcentre Plus means to each of the lone parent respondents, this question links to the ‘zone of tolerance’ theory (Galloway, 1999; Mower & Minor, 2001; Liljander & Strandvik, 1993).

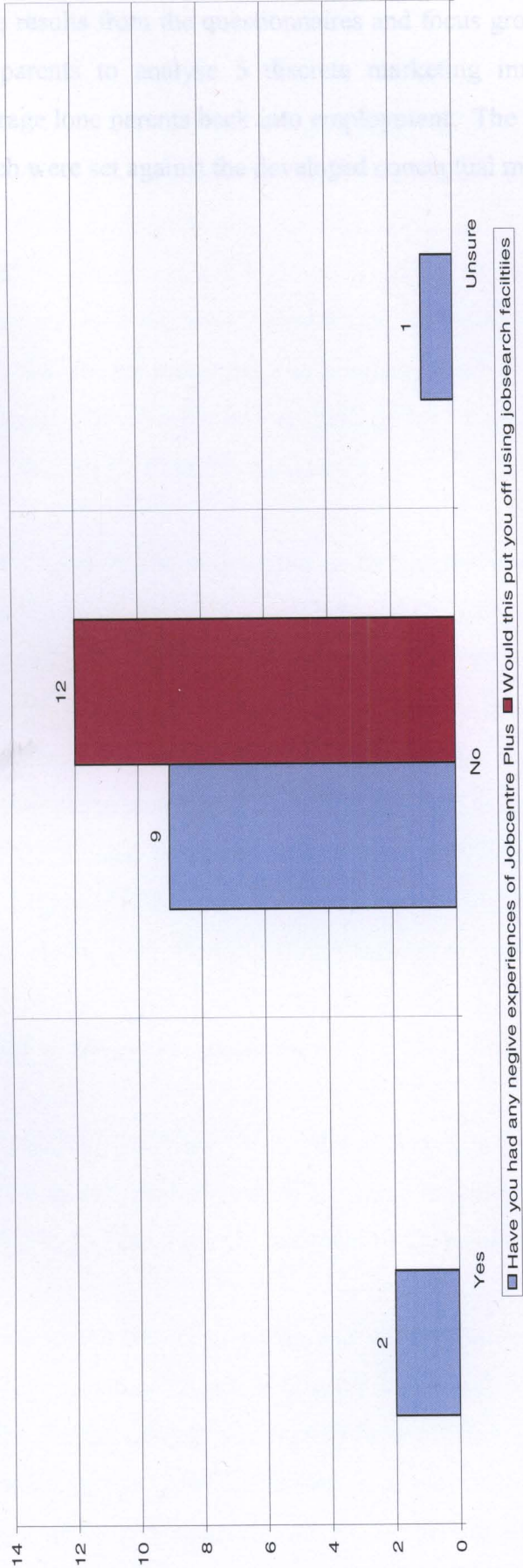
What does Jobcentre Plus mean to you?



The findings from this chart show that the majority of lone parent respondents relate Jobcentre Plus to job search and / or looking for a job.

4.4.1.3 Figure 19 – This chart relates to whether lone parents have had any negative experiences of Jobcentre Plus and linked to figure 18 would this deter them from using Jobcentre Plus for Job search, this concept links to the ‘zone of tolerance’ theory (Galloway, 1999; Mower & Minor, 2001; Liljander & Strandvik, 1993).

Have you had any negative experiences of using Jobcentre Plus, would this stop you from using job search services



The findings from this question show that even if a lone parent has had a negative experience of using Jobcentre Plus they would still use Jobcentre Plus for job search services.

4.5 Summary

Chapter 4 introduces the results from the questionnaires and focus groups which were undertaken with lone parents to analyse 5 discrete marketing images utilised by Jobcentre Plus to encourage lone parents back into employment. The chapter considers the research results which were set against the developed conceptual model.

5 Conclusions and implications

5.1 Introduction

Chapter 5 presents the conclusions against the research results as detailed within chapter 4. The collection of the research results has been presented within chapter 4 in a variety of forms, including bar charts, histograms and pie charts. These representations of the research results identified themes throughout in the research. For example, there appears to be a direct correlation between the AIDA model (Strong 1925) and the responses from the lone parents to the images presented. Furthermore, there is some evidence to suggest that 'Weltanschauung or Worldview' as defined by Checkland (2001), may have an impact on how lone parents interpret the images.

However, in this phase of analysis it is essential to thoroughly critique the findings presented in chapter 4 and to explore correlations between the research results and the research aims. Additionally, chapter 5 will compare and examine the findings established in this research with other literature, most notably in the work of other models of advertisement measurement referred to in chapter 2, this includes the theories which have been identified in the conceptual model (figure 9) (Strong, 1925; Mower & Minor, 2001; Proctor 2007; Evans, Moutinho & Van Raaij, 1997; Hoyer & MacInnis, 2007; Galloway, 1999; Liljander & Strandvik, 1993; Lacey, 1998; Bignell, 2002; Van Leeuwen, 2006; Raber & Budd, 2003; Danesi, 2002; Clarke et al, 1998).

5.2 Critical evaluation of adopted methodology

Within chapter 3 the methodology utilised for this dissertation has been explained. The researcher utilised 3 focus groups and the use of 5 questionnaires containing the same questions but each related to 1 of the 5 images used within the research.

The questions developed within the focus group and within the questionnaire have a direct correlation from the literature review at chapter 2 in which a conceptual model was developed. The 'conceptual model' was created to test differing theories and how the lone parents responded to the questions linked to these theories such as AIDA. Within the methodology design, thought was given to the literature review and in particular the design of the conceptual model. All the questions detailed on the

questionnaire and at the focus groups have been linked to the theories within the conceptual model.

The lone parents who took part in the research were selected via alternative sources these are detailed within paragraph 3.3.2. The lone parents identified included some who were actively seeking employment and were on adviser caseloads and those who did not want to take up the offer to be on a caseload. The decision to use focus groups for this research has proved positive with differing dynamics coming into play within the group environment. For example 4 lone parents aged between 16 and 35 years of age had differing views on image 5, to those aged between 36 and 55. Although this was not identifiable from the questionnaire within the focus groups the younger age group presumed that image 5 was the grandmother of the children, whilst the older age group presumed that image 5 was the mother of the children. This view would seem to be supported by Threlfall (1999) who states that participation in a group tends to magnify an individual's wisdom as well as compensate for shortfalls and inexperience. The dynamics of the symbolic interaction throughout the group process nurtures various points of view without pressuring outcomes and allows for a level of true compassion on the topic discussed.

The venue setting and volunteer element that the researcher implemented within the research design of the focus group proved to be positive. The researcher telephoned each individual, explained the process and offered them a date and venue. This resulted in 86% of those invited to participate in the research attended. Response rates for similar activity with lone parent customers within the district stands at 1 to 3%. Utilising another form of data linked to lone parents responses only 80% attend mandatory interviews at Jobcentre Plus offices (Anonymous, 2008). Bloor et al (2002). Argument appears to be accurate in that focus group participants are not selected by means of systematic random sampling and the success of the group depends, at least in part, on the dynamics between individuals within the group.

As detailed within chapter 3, in terms of internal validity the 12 lone parents had no obvious reason for providing distorted answers in the focus group or via the questionnaires. However, the nature of the questions for the research were about making the shift from unemployment to employment, in a 'discussion group' environment

which was co-ordinated by a Jobcentre Plus member of staff, so it would be naive to presume that this would not bias the 'in-work' focus group discussion.

From the outset limitations and potential difficulties were addressed and identified by the researcher. When the researcher identified a note-taker should be present at the focus groups, an expert within the advisory field for Jobcentre Plus was sought. The local Jobcentre Plus office in Chester was approached due to the location of the focus groups. The expert sought was an adviser who was skilled in interview techniques and guidance. This resource proved to be invaluable as she was able to answer any technical queries lone parents had with regard to lone parent advisory process. On occasions the focus group discussions shifted onto Government policy, the researcher carefully re-focused the discussions when these interruptions occurred back to the research in question. This required some expertise as the researcher has worked in a Jobcentre environment in excess of 16 years and was able to handle any rowdiness within the group with the support of the note taker.

The questionnaire was checked for any inconsistencies which included validity and reliability by the Jobcentre Plus Work Psychologist. This check did not take account of the number of questions asked of lone parents. In total lone parents were asked to answer 100 questions within a questionnaire format (20 questions on each of the discrete images used in the research). In hindsight the number of questions was excessive and a reduction in the questions could have been managed with questions being asked in such a way that they covered a multitude of differing theories that were utilised within the conceptual model.

In an attempt to check the reliability of the questionnaire as suggested by Fisher (2007) and Saunders et al (2007) 2 questions on the questionnaire were the same, a point to note is that the researcher should have been more mindful in the placing of the same questions on the questionnaire as they followed each other. This caused debate amongst the lone parents, but it appeared to be passed off as a typing error by them.

In hindsight it may have been beneficial to conduct some semi-structured interviews to complement the focus group and questionnaires. Although due to the restriction of Government departments being able to utilise customer data during this period, it may have been difficult to identify customers through the direct mail route (BBC, 2007a).

Threlfall (1999) states that it is often unclear whether the behaviour generated in a group setting would occur individually without the group influence, it may have been interesting to test this theory.

The lone parent sample size asked to participate within this research was very small and therefore all the research findings come with a health warning. Although, using a small sample size is appropriate for this customer group, it also means that all the research findings come with a note of caution.

5.3 Conclusions about each research objective (aim)

5.4 To understand the theoretical underpinning of advertising images

The research question that has been investigated for this dissertation was developed to obtain an insight into the Governments' 15 year plan on eradicating child poverty by 2020 and Jobcentre Plus's part in this (Welfare Reform Green Paper, 2007). This developed through the use of marketing imagery and how certain imagery is viewed by lone parents (Appendix 1 – Images 1 to 5) and that by utilising effective marketing imagery lone parents may use Jobcentre Plus services voluntarily to seek employment. According to Branthwaite (2002) in this climate, market research has an important role in finding appropriate imagery to impress customers.

Chapter 2 provides critical considerations from some of the academic theories developed on advertising images. As a result of this theoretical underpinning a conceptual model was developed (figure 9), which was utilised to inform the questions asked of lone parents at the focus groups and within the questionnaire.

5.5 To investigate unemployed lone parents responses to advertising images currently in use by the Government Agency Jobcentre Plus

The focus groups and questionnaires completed by the lone parents who participated in the research have proved rich in data (as detailed in chapter 4), the questions asked

within the research link directly to the conceptual model (figure 9) which was formulated from the literature review.

The analysis of the information found that if a lone parent was attracted to an image (figure 10), they also found that image interesting (figure 11) desirable (figure 12) and they stated that the image would make them take action to find a job (figure 13). Image 3 was identified in the research as the most popular image amongst the lone parents, followed by image 2. The lone parents made reference to the images that they found interesting by commenting on the subject in image 3 “she looks just like us, she looks real”. Their comments with regard to image 2 were not as flattering and although this was the second image that attracted their attention, some lone parents were offended by the text related to the image, which stated “Those little treats make my son smile”. Some of the lone parents interpreted this text as there is a perception that if you are a lone parent you do not treat your children.

These research findings also followed suit with, the least favourite images identified by the lone parents, with image 5 scoring the least, closely followed by image 4. The lone parents responses were that the least favoured images did not attract their attention (figure 10), they found the images uninteresting (figure 11) and not desirable (figure 12) they also suggested that these images would not encourage them to find work (figure 13). Interestingly, image 5 did cause some debate with the lone parents with differing age groups interpreting the image differently (this is explained in paragraph 5.2).

The research conducted, sampled how each lone parent interpreted each of the 5 discrete images. Surprisingly image 3 had 2 differing meanings for individuals in the focus groups, whilst image 5 had 4 descriptors provided by different individuals. All of the 5 images represented had at least 2 differing interpretations by individual lone parents within the group. Figure 17 provides an overview of the image interpretations observed from the research.

Within the research 18% of the 11 lone parents who answered this research question stated that they had experienced some negativity with Jobcentre Plus, (only 11 of the 12 lone parents’ answered this question on the questionnaire). Interestingly all of the lone parent participants stated that this would not deter them from using Jobcentre Plus services for job search services (figure 19). The lone parents were also questioned with

regard to the services they related Jobcentre Plus to, 91% stated that they linked Jobcentre Plus to job search services and getting a job. With only 9% stating that they linked Jobcentre Plus to the payment of Government benefits (figure 18).

Each lone parent was questioned to establish if they recognised who had produced the lone parent image, with 83% overall stating that Jobcentre Plus had produced each image. The image to score the lowest in this research was image 5, with 25% stating that they were unsure who had produced the image, further delving within the focus group established that the lack of text or a logo added to the image not being recognised (figure 15).

Lastly, lone parents were asked to provide an insight into which image they thought had helped them to look for a job, image 3 was the most likely to help them look for a job (lone parents related this in the focus group to the text and image combined). The next image that the lone parents stated had helped them to look for a job was image 1 (again this was linked to the image and the text). The least favoured in helping the lone parents find a job was image 5.

The research findings linked to the above are detailed within chapter 4 in bar charts, histograms and pie chart formats.

5.6 Compare and contrast the findings of aims 1 and 2

Jhally, Sut (as cited within Cortese, 2004) stated that the average person is exposed to 3600 commercial impressions every day, making advertising the most pervasive in the consumer culture. So how does the research undertaken, (chapter 3 and 4) in this dissertation compare to the literature review (chapter 2) and the theories utilised within the conceptual model.

Within the analysis of the research conducted with the 12 lone parents various academic theories were tested. One of which was linked to Blythe (2005) claims that drive leads onto motivation, which is the reason why people take action. The level of action will depend on the desirability of the end goal and the ease of achieving it. This is a view

shared by many academics and in-particular can be likened to the Communications Objectives demonstrated within figure 1 which details Strong's (1925) AIDA Model. Figure's 10, 11, 12 and 13 demonstrate that links do exist between the 5 marketing images tested with the lone parents and the AIDA Model. In that, if an image gets a lone parents attention it also raises their interest, desire and then this leads them to take action (figure 14). Image 3 was represented as the most popular image by lone parents with image 5 being the least favourable. A point to note that was highlighted within figures 10, 11, 12 and 13 was that the images demonstrated the attention, interest and desire elements from the AIDA model in preference order. For example the most favoured (image 3) scored highly on the 4 AIDA elements tested with the least favoured (image 5) scoring the least on all the findings.

Interestingly, lone parents were drawn to image 3 and some particularly commented on the image by stating "she looks like a lone parent, she looks just like us". This would counteract the arguments made by Richin (1991) and Cotese (2004) who have argued that advertising represents an unrealistic or idealised picture of people and their lives. The image represented was indeed a lone parent, who had relayed key points of her experience in finding employment which appeared within the text which was linked to the image. Groucutt's (2005) statement on the key to successful marketing could indeed be supported within the research findings as lone parents preferred the marketing imagery that they related to rather than models who had posed for images like (image 4) and (image 5). The research findings suggest that the lone parents related more to the images that they socially connected to.

Galloway (1999) suggests that consumers identify a zone of tolerance in terms of actual service performance (as described in paragraph 2.3.1). Liljander & Strandivik (1993) and Mower & Minor (2001) claim that consumers will feel unsatisfied if service performance is below expectations and they will feel satisfied when expectations are confirmed as exceeded. The researchers initial thoughts on this theory were that when the zone of tolerance is linked to Jobcentre Plus services and performance, this could have an impact on a lone parents overall judgement of the services. For example if a lone parent applies for Government benefits and the claim is delayed for some reason

this could impact their zone of tolerance of Jobcentre Plus services. This was not the case in the research findings although 25% of lone parents stated that they had, experienced some negativity with Jobcentre Plus (figure 19). All of the lone parents went on to state that they would utilise Jobcentre Plus for job search (figure 19). Conversely these findings do support Galloway (1999) argument that the achievement of some standards or improvement in an element of the service will generate satisfaction, but its absence, or reduction will not generate dissatisfaction. The research findings continue to support Galloway's (1999) claim with 91% of lone parents stating that Jobcentre Plus means job search services to them (figure 18).

Danesi (2002) claims that semiotics method, is fundamental because it focuses almost exclusively on hidden meanings. This theory was tested with the lone parents (figure 15 details these findings). All the lone parents who participated in the research recognised that images 1 to 4 had been produced by Jobcentre Plus. However the findings for image 5 were not so simplistic with 16% of the lone parents stating that they did not know who had produced this image. Semiotics was further explored with lone parents at the focus groups, with all the lone parents stating that they recognised Jobcentre Plus marketing materials via the images utilised, the colours used and the wording of the text. All of the lone parent participants recognised the logo, with 91% of the lone parents linking the logo/brand to some form of job search activity (figure 19). These findings support Clarke et al (1998) who details comments from De Saussure that meanings derive from the priorities which people perceive from their active interpretation of largely linguistic signs.

Worldview is a term calqued from the German word *Weltanschauung* (*Welt* is the German word for "world"), and *Anschauung* is the German word for "view" or "outlook." It is a concept fundamental to German philosophy and epistemology and refers to a wide world perception. Additionally, it refers to the framework of ideas and beliefs through which an individual interprets the world and interacts with it (Cobern, 1993; Checkland, 2001). The concept of Worldview was tested with the lone parents to see if they interpreted images differently and indeed they did. Figure 17 provides details on the differing interpretations made with regard to the 5 images utilised.

Image 5 was debated by the lone parents, as detailed in paragraph 4.3, with differing ages of lone parents having different views about the image. Image 2 also caused some debate amongst the lone parents, with some taking offence to the text represented with the image. The text states “Those little treats really make my son smile”. Some of the lone parents interpreted this as they wouldn’t treat their children as they don’t have a job. The research findings do support Checkland (2001), Cobern (1993) and Lacey (1998) findings that images are not interpreted in exactly the same way, but are indeed interpreted by an individual’s understanding of the world.

Similarly the way the lone parent respondents receive and decode images is pertinent to the debate Mower & Minor (2001) and Proctor (2007) claim that the characteristics of the channel, influence the interpretation of the message, as well as the information processed. The researcher tested this theory within figures 13 and 14 which identified how and if the lone parents interpreted the 5 images and thereafter how they processed the messages within. Figure 13 indicates that lone parents found image 3 the most effective in relaying the message in encouraging them to find a job. Interestingly, via the decoding of the information image 3 also scored highly with lone parent respondents stating that this image had helped them to look for a job. These findings would suggest that a lone parent could look at an appropriate image and interpret the message within. Messaging used effectively may drive them to find employment via the suggested route.

Branthwaite (2002) affirms that images should be simple and direct and the presentation should engage and communicate mood, emotion and brand message. The researcher has explored similar links to this theory with Strong’s (1925) AIDA Model. The testing of the AIDA Model with the lone parents identified a direct link between the images that attracted lone parent’s attention, interest, desire and action. The image most favoured which linked into all the aforementioned criteria was image 3, which scored highly on each element of the model, image 5 was the least favoured amongst the lone parents. The lone parent participants recognised who had produced each of the images utilised in the research by images used, colours, the text and the placement of the Jobcentre Plus logo (figure 15 and figure 16). These findings do in fact support Branthwaite’s (2002) “facet of an image otherwise known as the 4 Cs theory” as the lone parent participants related to the characteristics and styles of the images, the contents (some of the lone parents commented on the content of the images, for example the text used within image 2, the findings for this are detailed above). The lone parents interpreted each

image differently which had differing connotations this is detailed within figure 17, lastly figures 12, 13, 14 and 17 represent a link to the concept that each image has a context.

5.7 To draw conclusion for consideration based on the findings made within aim

3

The research conducted within the dissertation showed a clear link with the 4 components of Strong's (1925) AIDA Model. The research findings seem to indicate that if an image caught a lone parent's attention, then this would attract their interest, desire and then lead them to take action. Lone parents were particularly attracted to the imagery that they related to or linked to their social surroundings. These findings seem to support Cortese's (2004) argument that the images that we see in advertising are not perceived as unnatural or artificial; they are seen as real life – something to be copied or emulated. In short, postmodern advertising is a delusion that trivialises the complex social problems as everyday individual ones that can be solved by purchasing the appropriate product. Interestingly, the lone parents did not seem to relate or pay attention to the choice of models in the images. Perhaps some thought should be given to Cortese's (2004) argument that this form of imagery may seem too far out of reach for the lone parents to connect with.

The lone parents seemed to have a strong recognition to the Jobcentre Plus brand they even made connections between the images used in the marketing products, the copy (tone of voice) and the colour pallet utilised. These findings would appear to support Danesi (2002) Lacey (1998), Bignell (2002), Van Leeuwen (2006), Raber & Budd, (2003), Clarke et al (1998) claims that the semiotic method is fundamental because it focuses almost exclusively on hidden meanings. Taking this further a connection was sought between semiotics and Checkland (2001) Worldview/weltanschauung lone parents connected with various images, although their interpretation of each image varied, with some taking offence. Care needs to be taken when text is used, perhaps clear links to employment should be considered rather than hidden messages which could have a potentially demeaning connotation.

Evans, Moutinho & Van Raaij (1997), Hoyer & MacInnis (2007), Lacey (1998), Mower & Minor (2001) and Proctor (2007) receivers decode theory that suggests the

characteristics of the channel, influence the interpretation of the message, as well as the information processed. The research findings would suggest that this theory is supported and is similar to the findings which tested 'semiotics' and 'Worldview/weltanschauung'. A lone parent can look at an appropriate image and interpret the message within. Messaging used effectively may drive them to find employment via the suggested route.

The suggestions by Walsh (1994) and Bean & Hussey (1997) claiming that the end users of public sector services are not responsible for any part of the exchange process appear, not to be supported in the research findings. As lone parents intimated that they would always utilise Jobcentre Plus for job search services if they were looking for a job. Linking this suggestion to Galloway (1999) and Mower & Minor (2001) "zone of tolerance" theory, even those lone parents who had encountered a negative experience of Jobcentre Plus services stated that they would always use Jobcentre Plus for job search.

A point to note when utilising marketing imagery is that the lone parents who participated in this research all resided in one geographical area of Chester which is within the top 10% of the indices of deprivation. However by segmentation of the lone parent audience, taking account of their age, the area that they reside in and linking 'real images' of people who are employed may be beneficial when creating future images for national and regional marketing campaigns. This view is supported by Rowley (1998) who states the first stage in communication is to characterise the target audience.

5.8 Conclusions about the research question

The conclusions about the research question are detailed within paragraph 5.7. However, the points to note about the conclusion are detailed below:

- The 4 components of Strong's (1925) AIDA Model seem to be supported within the research findings, in that the images that captured the lone parents' attention also gained their interest, desire and inevitable this then led them to take action.
- Danesi's (2002), Lacey (1998), Bignell (2002), Van Leeuwen (2006), Raber & Budd, (2003), Clarke et al (1998) claims that semiotic method is fundamental as

it focuses almost on hidden meaning appears to be supported. The lone parent respondents linked the colour pallet used on marketing materials, the text utilised and the images on marketing materials to Jobcentre Plus.

- Interestingly, Checkland's (2001) Worldview/weltanschauung theory also appears to be supported, as the research findings identified that lone parents' interpretations of the 5 images used within the research design varied throughout the group (see figure 17).
- The research findings to the 'receivers decodes' theory suggested by Evans, Moutinho & Van Raaij (1997), Hoyer & MacInnis (2007), Lacey (1998), Mower & Minor (2001) and Proctor (2007) appear to be similar to the 'semiotics' and 'Worldview/weltanschauung' findings in that a lone parent can look at an appropriate image and interpret the message within. Messaging used effectively may drive them to find employment via the suggested route.
- Walsh (1994) and Bean & Hussey (1997) claim that the end user of public services are not responsible for any part of the exchange process. This view does not appear to be the cases within the research findings as lone parents' stated that they would always use Jobcentre Plus voluntarily for job search services.
- Galloway (1999) and Mower & Minor (2001) 'zone of tolerance' theory does not seem to be supported within the research findings, as even those lone parents who had encountered negativity of the Jobcentre Plus service claimed they would use Jobcentre Plus for job search.
- Walsh (1994) affirms that marketing for the public service will need to develop a psychology of citizenship to match the psychology of the consumer. This view emerged throughout the research, in that to achieve success with the marketing of the Jobcentre Plus services it is essential to segment the target audience.

5.9 Limitations of the study

The study of lone parent responses to 5 discrete Jobcentre Plus images was limited in a number of ways, these include:

- 1) The research design of the study consisted of a small number of lone parents (12 in total) who all reside in the same geographical area of Chester. A wider lone parent audience against a national backdrop i.e. from across the UK may have proved fruitful and may have provided rich data, from across a wider sample.

However it is also true to say that the group make-up of the 12 Chester lone parents was representative of the national lone parent statistics (DWP, 2006).

- 2) The extent to which the findings of the research study is applicable to other settings, namely the generalisability; the study could be described as low. The reason being that the study consisted of a relatively small number of lone parent participants. Plus the limited use of only 5 images that were specific to Jobcentre Plus identify that this study has limited external validity.
- 3) The research only related to 5 discrete images utilised by the Government Agency Jobcentre Plus perhaps a wider use of images may be beneficial for future research.

5.10 Opportunities for further research

This research presents a range of opportunities for further research, including:

- 1) A further, larger scale exercise similar in content although widening the methodology by including some semi-structured interviews. This could help test the efforts made here and draw further conclusions.
- 2) A study directly comparing the responses to advertising images of the unemployed with those employed, may be beneficial in teasing out differences and help tackle the original research problem.
- 3) A comparative international study measuring the differences/similarities in responses to the same or a similar set of images across different nations and cultures would tackle some of the cultural issues touched upon by this study. This could also enable findings to be generalised.
- 4) A wider set of marketing images to be utilised to include imagery used by employment agencies. This may be able to further test the findings within this research and feeling towards Jobcentre Plus job search services and that of other organisations.

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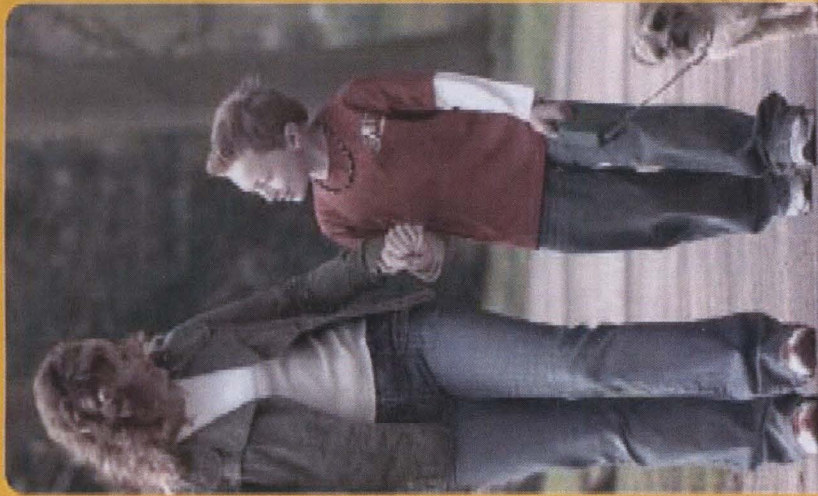
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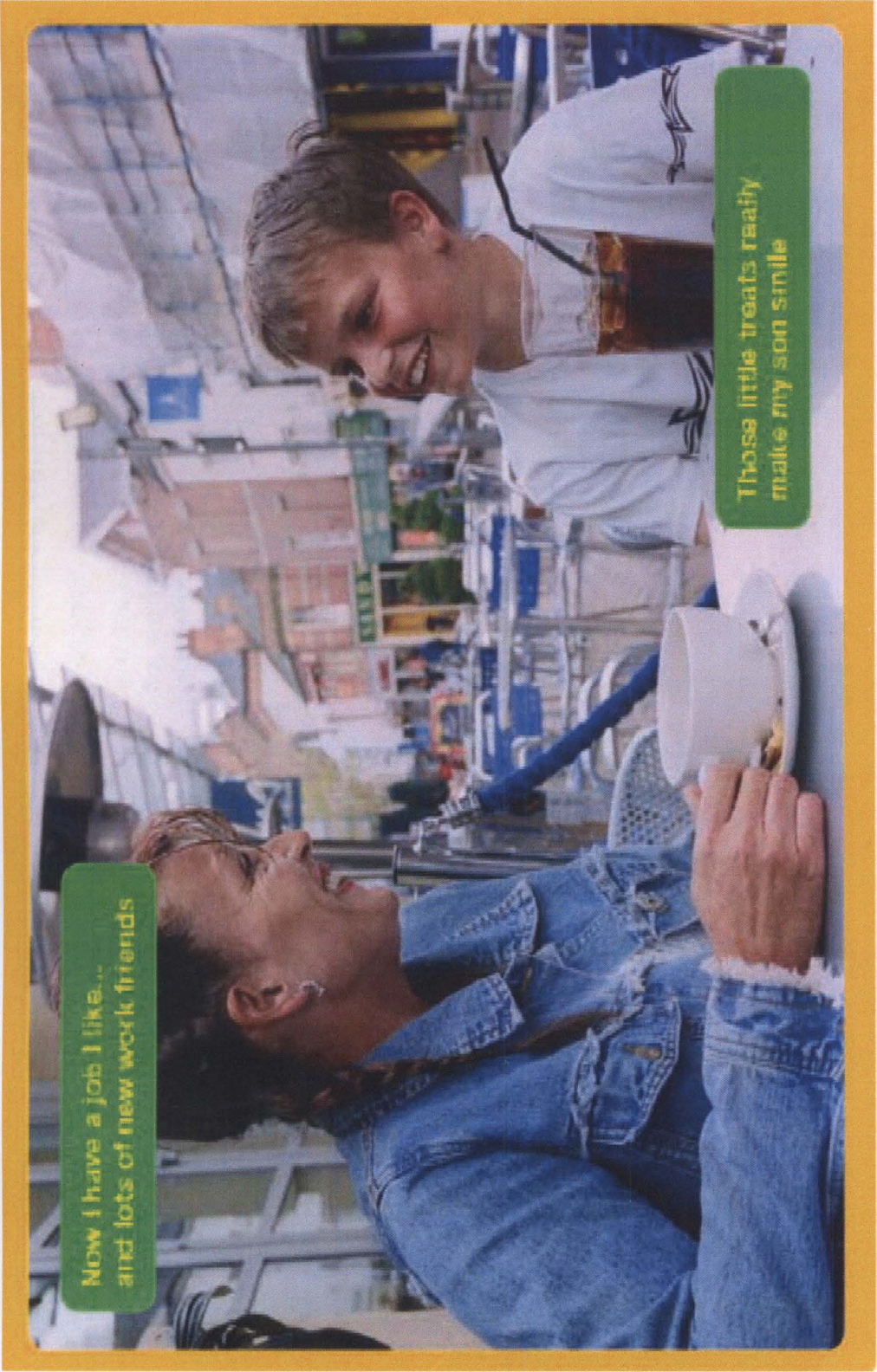
I'd love to work,
but where do I start?



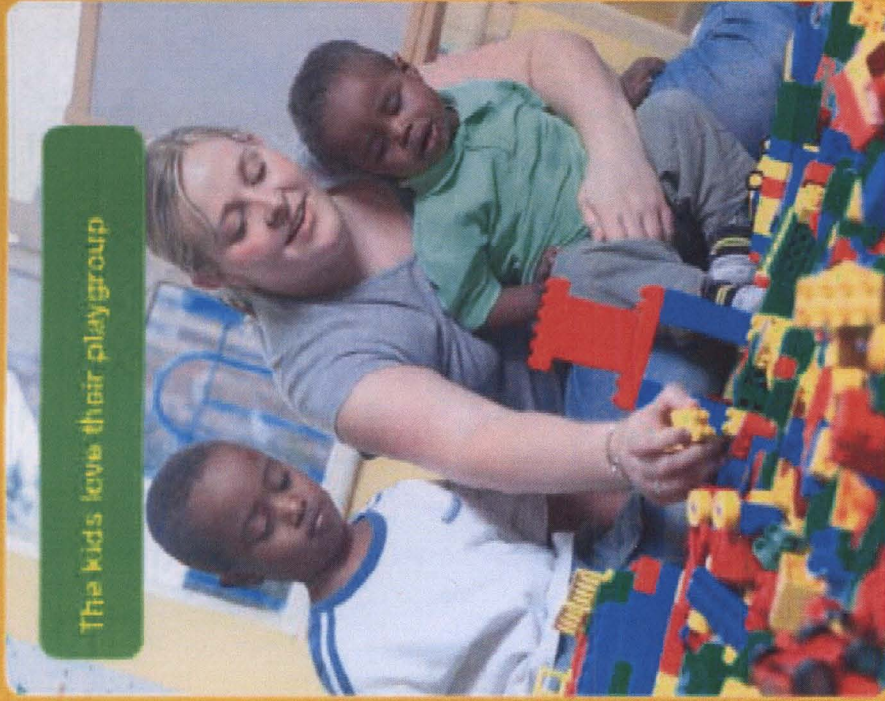
Shouldn't I stay
at home with the kids?



Will I be worse off
in work?



The kids love their playgroup



Supporting you into work

Getting back to work isn't easy, but we can help. If you need new skills we can help you find training. Plus, we may be able to cover your transport and childcare costs when you go to interviews if they're arranged by us.

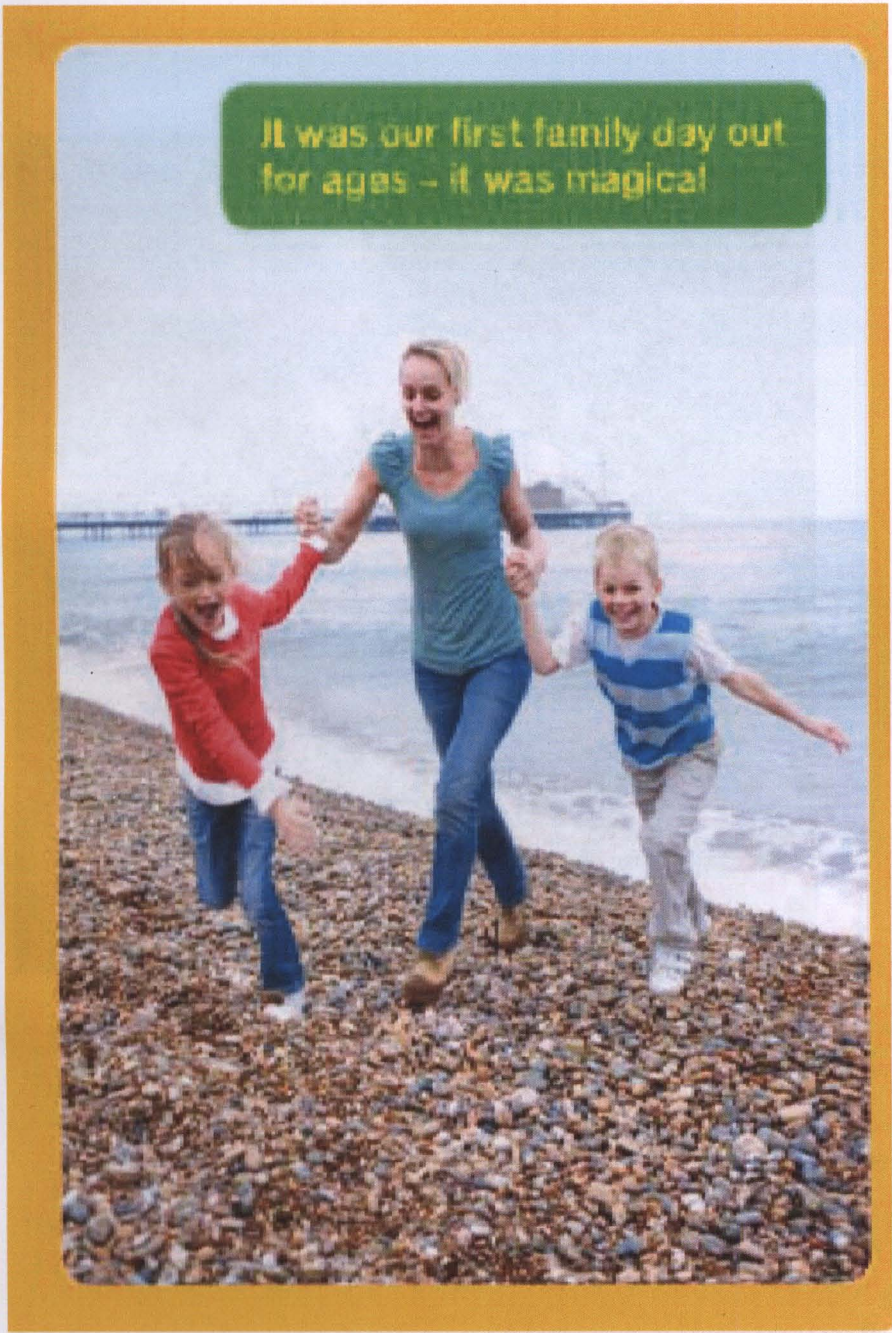
Every day, our advisers help hundreds of people into work – many of these are parents, just like you. Their support doesn't end when your job starts, either.

A better life for you and your children

Having a new job will help your self-confidence and will be great for you and your children. Plus, with the extra money you earn you can buy your children and yourself those little treats that make life more fun.

"My kids have seen such a change in me. They're happier and they're happy for me. I can't thank my Lone Parent Adviser enough for helping me believe in myself." Lone Parent, Janice, Bucks.

Appendix 1 - Image 4



Appendix 1 - Image 5



1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
Strongly disagree	disagree	unsure	agree	strongly agree

1. The advert attracts your attention?

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
Strongly disagree	disagree	Unsure	agree	strongly agree

2. The advert is interesting?

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
Strongly disagree	disagree	Unsure	agree	strongly agree

7 Appendix 2 - Questionnaire

Image Number 5

Questionnaire

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the focus group. The information you provide on this questionnaire is confidential and no names or personal details will be kept with this questionnaire.

Please look at the 5 images and complete a questionnaire relating to each image. Each image is numbered; please complete the questionnaire relating to the image number, for example, Image Number 5 at the top of the page. Please circle **one** answer only for each question.

Example

I like chocolate?

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
- Strongly disagree
- disagree
- unsureagree
- strongly agree

1. The advert attracts your attention?

1. Strongly disagree	2. disagree	3. Unsure	4. agree	5. strongly agree
-------------------------	----------------	--------------	-------------	----------------------

2. The advert is interesting?

1. Strongly disagree	2. disagree	3. Unsure	4. agree	5. strongly agree
-------------------------	----------------	--------------	-------------	----------------------

3. This advert encourages you to find a job?

1. Strongly disagree	2. disagree	3. Unsure	4. agree	5. strongly agree
-------------------------	----------------	--------------	-------------	----------------------

4. This advert makes me want to find a job?

1. Strongly disagree	2. disagree	3. Unsure	4. agree	5. strongly agree
-------------------------	----------------	--------------	-------------	----------------------

5. The advert makes me want to find a job?

1. Strongly disagree	2. disagree	3. Unsure	4. agree	5. strongly agree
-------------------------	----------------	--------------	-------------	----------------------

6. The advert will make you begin to look for a job?

1. Strongly disagree	2. disagree	3. Unsure	4. agree	5. strongly agree
-------------------------	----------------	--------------	-------------	----------------------

7. Has the advert helped you to decide to look for a job?

1. Strongly disagree	2. disagree	3. Unsure	4. agree	5. strongly agree
-------------------------	----------------	--------------	-------------	----------------------

8. You like the advert?

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
Strongly disagree	disagree	Unsure	agree	strongly agree

Please state why you like or dislike the advert

.....

.....

.....

.....

9. The advert is easy to understand?

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
Strongly disagree	disagree	Unsure	agree	strongly agree

10. How do you feel when you look at this advert?

.....

.....

.....

.....

11. Do you know who has produced this advert?

1.	2.	3.
Yes	Unsure	No

12. The advert is Attractive?

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
Strongly disagree	disagree	Unsure	agree	strongly agree

13. The advert puts you off applying for a job

1. Strongly disagree	2. disagree	3. Unsure	4. agree	5. strongly agree
-------------------------	----------------	--------------	-------------	----------------------

If the advert puts you off applying for a job Please explain why (if the advert does not put you off applying for a job please go directly to question 14.

.....

.....

.....

14. The advert makes you more aware of how to apply for a job?

1. Strongly disagree	2. disagree	3. Unsure	4. agree	5. strongly agree
-------------------------	----------------	--------------	-------------	----------------------

15. How do you feel about Jobcentre Plus?

1. Very Negative	2. Negative	3. Unsure	4. Positive	5. Very Positive
---------------------	----------------	--------------	----------------	---------------------

16. Do you think you will find a job?

1. Strongly disagree	2. disagree	3. Unsure	4. agree	5. strongly agree
-------------------------	----------------	--------------	-------------	----------------------

17. Do you think that Jobcentre Plus will help you to find a job?

1. Strongly disagree	2. disagree	3. Unsure	4. agree	5. strongly agree
-------------------------	----------------	--------------	-------------	----------------------

If you think that Jobcentre Plus won't help you find a job please state why (if you think that Jobcentre Plus will help you find a job please go directly to question 18.

.....

.....

.....

18. Do you recognise the Jobcentre Plus brand?

1. Yes	2. Unsure	3. No
-----------	--------------	----------

19 Please explain what the Jobcentre Plus brand means to you?

.....

.....

.....

20. Please explain what this advert means to you, when you look at it?

.....

.....

.....

Thank you for completing this questionnaire.

British Broadcasting Corporation [BBC]. (2007). *A Century of Milestones*. Accessed 6th February 2007 from the BBC Web-site:

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/spl/hi/business/05/breadlinebritain/html/default.stm>

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